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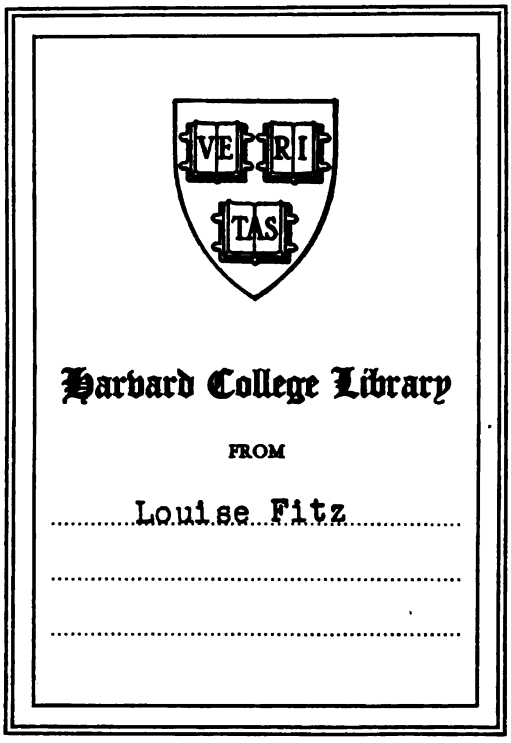


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# THE WORKS OF JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

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AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN

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NEW YORK: LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1904

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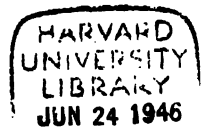


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VOLUME XIV

# ACADEMY NOTES

## NOTES ON PROUT AND HUNT

### AND OTHER ART CRITICISMS

1855–1888

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**Val d' Aosta**

From the picture in the possession of R F Cooper Esq

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# ACADEMY NOTES

## NOTES ON PROUT AND HUNT

### AND OTHER ART CRITICISMS

### 1855–1888

BY

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*Note.*—Of the drawings by Ruskin here reproduced, that of Plate xxi. was shown at the Coniston Exhibition, 1900 (No. 178), and that of Plate xxii. was reproduced by half-tone process in *Scribner's Magazine*, December 1898.



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# INTRODUCTION TO VOL. XIV

It was explained in the preceding Introduction that during the years which intervened between the fourth and the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin was engaged in four principal directions—(1) in arranging the Turner Bequest (Vol. XIII.); (2) in the criticism of contemporary art; (3) in the teaching of drawing; and (4) in public lecturing. The present volume covers the second branch of these activities. In it are collected the five numbers of *Notes on the Principal Pictures in the Royal Academy*, etc., which Ruskin wrote between 1855 and 1859; and to these are added the similar Notes written in 1875, together with various other pieces (1858–1888) which have for their subject the criticism of the art or artists of the time. The collection is not exhaustive, as other writings with similar subject-matter are necessarily reserved for later volumes. The most considerable of them are the extensive correspondence between Ruskin and D. G. Rossetti (1854–1867), and the Oxford lectures on contemporary British artists, entitled *The Art of England* (1884). These lectures are reserved for their chronological place in the series of Ruskin's professorial discourses at Oxford; the correspondence with Rossetti, though it includes many criticisms upon the painter's work, belongs more appropriately to the series of letters which are a memorial of Ruskin's friendships.[1]

The present volume is divided into three parts and an Appendix. Part I. comprises the six numbers of *Academy Notes*. In Part II. are brought together various scattered pieces on modern painters, draughtsmen, and engravers (1858–1888). Part III. is a reprint of the *Notes on Prout and Hunt* (1879); while in the Appendix will be found various minor letters, reports, and notes dealing with matters cognate to the other contents of the volume.

[1] Among other items, similarly reserved, are notes on Mr. Albert Goodwin and J. W. Bunney—these will be found in the volume containing matters related to Ruskin's Museum at Sheffield; and a series of letters to H. S. Marks, R.A. (in addition to those here given about F. Walker), included in the volume which collects Ruskin's Letters to Friends, already printed in various Memoirs, etc.



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## I

The vogue of Ruskin's books on art, and his wide circle of friends, pupils, and admirers, naturally led to frequent appeals for his opinion on current works of art. His private diaries and letters show that he was constantly being asked by amateurs for advice as to what they should buy; and a chief object of his books was to teach disciples what they should admire. The series of *Academy Notes*, begun in 1855 and continued annually until 1859, was thus undertaken to serve as a kind of "circular letter," telling people "the pictures in the Exhibitions of the year which appear to me most interesting, either in their good qualities or in their failure" (see p. 5). The Notes were intended also as particular criticisms designed to support and illustrate general statements in Ruskin's works. He had already, in the second edition of *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV., pp. 333–342), published under the heading "Addenda" (1848) some notes on pictures in recent Exhibitions of the Academy. The success of his letters to the *Times* on the Pre-Raphaelites (1851), in stemming the tide of hostile criticism against the young school, probably suggested to him the more regular and methodical exercise of his now considerable authority. "I do not at all care," he wrote in a letter of 1854, "for reputation in the matter. I *must* speak if I see people thinking what I know is wrong, and if there is any chance of my being listened to. I don't say I wouldn't care for reputation if I had it, but until people are ready to receive all I say about Art as 'unquestionable,' just as they receive what Faraday tells them about Chemistry, I don't consider myself to have any reputation at all worth caring about."[1] It was as one claiming authority that Ruskin wrote his *Academy Notes*. "Twenty years of severe labour," he said, "devoted exclusively to the study of the principles of Art, have given me the right to speak on the subject with a measure of confidence" (see p. 5). He exercised the right boldly; and his criticisms had considerable influence both on the work of several of the younger painters and in correcting the public taste of the time. *Academy Notes*, read in a connected form, are valuable, not only as containing Ruskin's individual opinions (not elsewhere expressed) on a large number of painters and pictures, but also as illustrating an important chapter in the history of art in this country. They also abound in passages of general interest, for with Ruskin criticism of art was

[1] *Letters from John Ruskin to F. J. Furnivall*, privately printed 1897, p. 31.

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criticism of everything. Ruskin himself, it may be added, seems at one time to have intended to re-issue the Notes, for proofs of a reprint of part of them (dated 1876) were found among his papers.

Ruskin's criticisms were fearless and trenchant. They may be described from this point of view as a revival in prose form of the *Lyric Odes to the Royal Academicians* which Dr. Wolcot, writing as Peter Pindar, had put out seventy years before (1782–1786). Ruskin showed no respect for names merely as names. He abased, so far as in him lay, some of the proud; he exalted many who were at the time of no reputation. "He does not condescend," wrote a reviewer, by way of reducing the Notes *ad absurdum*, "to notice Mr. Hart; but sees a future of good in Mr. Leighton." Time has in both cases vindicated Ruskin's criticism. The work of Solomon Hart is forgotten, while the promise shown in Leighton's "Cimabue" was steadily fulfilled.

Not all the painters whom he selected for notice won renown; but looking over these Notes after half a century has elapsed, the reader will be struck, as Mr. Collingwood has observed, by the shrewdness with which Ruskin "put his finger upon the weak points of the various artists, and no less upon their strong points"; and will remark "how many of the men he praised as beginners have risen to eminence, how many he blamed have sunk from a specious popularity into oblivion. . . . The men who laid their failure to his account were the weaklings whom he urged to attempts beyond their powers, with kindly support misconstrued into a prophecy of success."[1]

In this edition brief notes on the more important pictures and painters have been supplied. The short notice of each painter is given at the first mention of him, and can always be found on reference to the List (pp. 313–323). Biographical or critical particulars would have been out of place, but it has seemed well to remind the reader, by a few dates and other facts, of the stage in the career of the artists at which Ruskin's Notes were written. Ruskin, it will be seen, had the privilege of recognising, encouraging, and directing much early talent. It is important, with regard both to notices of particular painters and to remarks upon general tendencies, to read his Notes in relation to "the needs of English art at the time when they were made."[2]

Exception was taken in some quarters to the fact that Ruskin noticed only a few pictures in each exhibition. He replied that the pressure of time made a more extended critique impossible (see p. 147); and in

[1] *Life and Work of John Ruskin*, 1900, p. 162.

[2] Ruskin's phrase in sanctioning the reprint in 1886 of his Notes on Millais (see p. 495, below).

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this connection the dates of publication of the successive Notes may be given. The Exhibition of the Academy opens on the first Monday in May. No. I. of the Notes was issued on June 1, 1855. Some of the men at the printers' were kept late on the work, and Ruskin characteristically sent them each a present (see the letter given below, p. 457). From the same letter it appears that the pamphlet was to be sold "as near the doors of the Academy as may be." No. II. was published on May 9, 1856, at 6d.; No. III., on May 16, 1857, at 1s.; No. IV., on May 8, 1858, at 1s.; No. V., on May 9, 1859, at 1s. Nos. I.–V. were published by Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. No. VI. (1875) was issued at the end of May, at 1s. It was printed at Aylesbury, and Ruskin went down there to see it through the press.

It was a main object of Ruskin's Notes to encourage and trace the growth of the Pre-Raphaelite influence. From this point of view, the first part of the present volume is a sequel to the earlier advocacy of the Brotherhood recorded in Volume XII. He devotes special attention in these *Academy Notes* to Pre-Raphaelite work (*e.g.*, pp. 19, 22), and then notices how the young school was winning all along the line (see pp. 47, 91). On behalf of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in the North he wrote at the same time some letters to the press, which will here be found in Part II. (pp. 327–331). In whatever respects British art after 1855 showed an advance in sincerity of purpose and thoroughness of study, much of the credit is due to the criticisms of Ruskin, which at once inspired or confirmed the painters and directed the taste of the public. A considerable portion of the *Academy Notes* is devoted to Millais, whose genius Ruskin was the first to proclaim, and never ceased to acknowledge, though he felt impelled to notice what he considered signs of some falling away on the artist's part from the ideals of his youth. Millais bitterly resented such criticism, and believed it to be inspired by personal motives (see p. 117 *n.*). The facts negative such a supposition, as is pointed out below (p. 22 *n.*). In Appendix X. (pp. 495, 496) are reprinted some later criticisms on the painter, and references to others are supplied; in them he expressed his profound admiration for the "free-hand painting" of the master. If he found fault with Millais in other respects, did not the artist himself show some premonition when he wrote in the older days, "People had better buy my pictures now, when I am working for fame, than a few years later, when I shall be married and working for a wife and children"? No one, it will be seen, was quicker than Ruskin to applaud, when towards the end of the artist's career he returned to the more poetical and imaginative themes of his youth.

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It was a signal merit of Ruskin's *Academy Notes* that he called attention year after year to pieces of modest and quiet landscape by painters then unknown, which might otherwise have escaped notice altogether. His encouragement gave the decisive impetus to Alfred Hunt; he detected and praised the beautiful and still too little known work of Inchbold; he was among the warmest, as among the earliest, admirers of J. C. Hook; his criticisms called attention to the pictures of Brett, and Boyce, and Knight, of Henry Moore, and of Mr. Raven and Mr. Whaite.

With some of these painters Ruskin sought friendship, in order that he might the better encourage and assist them. Thus in 1856 he spent some time in Switzerland with Inchbold, and in later years continued to befriend, and also play the master to, the artist. He gives, with a touch of humour not to be taken too literally, an account of all this in a letter to his father:—

> "TURIN, *August* 9 [1858].—The two little drawings of which you speak in my bedroom are Inchbold's; the cottage, one I chose and made him draw at Lauterbrunnen; the Thun, bought when he couldn't sell anything, to help him a little. It isn't good for much, but is like a sweet Swiss evening. I wanted and ordered of him (paying him when he was at Chamouni last year) four more cottages; but he got entirely off the rails at Chamouni, and the cottages are failures. I stayed with him some time, or rather made him stay with me, at Bellinzona, in order to make him understand where he was wrong. He was vexed with his work and yet thought it was right, and didn't know why he didn't like it, nor why nobody liked it. It was a delicate and difficult matter to make him gradually find out his own faults (it's no use *telling* a man of them), and took me a fortnight of innuendoes. At last I think I succeeded in making him entirely uncomfortable and ashamed of himself, and then I left him."

So also Ruskin was for some years on terms of helpful friendship with Brett. The following letter of 1858 refers to a picture noticed in this volume (p. 234):—

> "TURIN, *August* 26.—I mentioned that Mr. Brett was with me at La Tour. He has been here a week to-day. I sent for him at Villeneuve, Val d'Aosta, because I didn't like what he said in his letter about his present work, and thought he wanted some lecturing like Inchbold: besides that, he could give me some useful hints. He is much tougher and stronger than Inchbold, and takes more

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> hammering; but I think he looks more miserable every day, and have good hope of making him completely wretched in a day or two more—and then I shall send him back to his castle. He is living *in* that castle which I sketched so long ago in Val d'Aosta—Château St. Pierre."[1]

Brett's picture (here reproduced as frontispiece) was bought by Ruskin, and hung in the drawing-room at Herne Hill until Ruskin's death. In 1869 it was offered for sale at Christie's and bought in (Vol. XIII. p. 572). It is now in the possession of Mr. R. P. Cooper.

Records of Ruskin's encouragement to other artists will be found in Appendix II. (Smetham) and III. (Seddon), pp. 461, 464.

Among foreign painters Ruskin was the first to call public attention in this country to the domestic idylls of Frère (pp. 83, 142, 174, 251).

In cases where Ruskin was not personally known to the painters, his criticisms often were no less powerful in suggestion, encouragement, or rebuke. For instance, at the beginning of the Notes for 1858 (p. 164) Ruskin had pointed out the beauty of the delicate pink of apple blossoms against the soft clear blue of a spring sky, and expressed his surprise that among all the modest and gentle beauties of nature which the new school have particularly made it their study to express, none of them should have chosen this. In the exhibition of the following year, it was noticed that "three distinguished artists had set themselves the task in consequence."[2]

Of another criticism of Ruskin's—that in the Notes of 1858 on Carrick's "Weary Life" (p. 164)—a fine and touching incident is recorded. Ruskin was abroad at the time:—

> "Vokins wished me to name to you," wrote his father (June 3, 1858), "that Carrick, when he read your criticism on Weary Life, came to him with the cheque Vokins had given, and said your remarks were all right, and that he could not take the price paid by Vokins, the buyer; he would alter the picture. Vokins took back the money, only agreeing to see the picture when it was done."[3]

[1] The sketch (1835) is reproduced as Plate 21 in Vol. II. (p. 432).

[2] Namely, Millais in his "Spring," J. C. Horsley in "Blossom-time," and Mr. Hughes in "The King's Orchard" (*Economist*, May 28, 1859). So in another critique we read: "Ruskin has much to answer for. Probably such an avalanche of misconception and untruth was never let loose on the patient art-loving, nature-loving wanderer before. From Millais (who paints blossoms as big as babies' heads, growing on trees in full leaf) down to the sorriest scrub who seeks a teacher's certificate from the Department of Art, all appear to have taken the apple-blossom fever, and to have painted the blossoms when at the height of their delirium."

[3] Collingwood's *Life and Work of Ruskin*, 1900, p. 162.

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Ruskin's comment on the incident is contained in the following reply:—

> "Bellinzona, *June* 13.—I'm sorry, and yet glad, that Carrick behaved so nobly about his picture. I don't see that he need have given back his cheque, as I conceive a dealer's price is always intended to take the risk on either side, and that an artist, as he has no right to complain if the dealer doubles profit, so neither need he make restitution if the chance turns the other way. However, if artists always acted as Carrick has done, dealers would soon come to allow them a share in rise of price, which would be the just way for all parties."

Such anecdotes illustrate the interest which Ruskin's criticisms excited, and the influence which they exerted. "Mr. Ruskin's authoritative Notes," wrote a reviewer in 1858, "are now looked anxiously for by a number of ductile people, as something dogmatic and decisive, from which there is no appeal. . . . Besides, Mr. Ruskin's trenchant self-assertion of censorship creates a sort of tumult among artists, which is caught up and echoed by people out of doors, and enjoyed with all the zest of a scandal."[1]

It was not, however, only "trenchant self-assertion" that gave influence to his Notes. He wrote with authority, but he gave chapter and verse for it, and his criticisms were such as appealed to artists, as well as to the general public. It is sometimes said by those who have never carefully studied Ruskin that he showed no knowledge or appreciation of pictures as pictures, that he cared only for meaning and not at all for method, that he judged art from a purely literary standard.[2] This view can only be entertained by those whose knowledge of Ruskin's works is partial or superficial, and it may be useful to point out how completely it is traversed by the criticisms collected in the present volume. Turn, for instance, to the note on Herbert's "King Lear" (p. 18): criticism of that microscopic and technical character is not the work of a merely literary judge. Or consider the criticism of Roberts's "Duomo at Milan" (p. 95); or that of Maclise's "Peter the Great" (p. 96): these are the observations of a student of nature and a sketcher. In the *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, of a later date, Ruskin reaffirms a principle which he had often previously asserted — that "interest in the story of a picture does not in the least signify a relative interest in the art

[1] *The Leader*, May 22, 1858.

[2] See, for instance, a lecture on Ruskin delivered at the Royal Academy by Mr. Val Prinsep, R.A., and reported in the *Westminster Gazette* of January 20, 1903.

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of painting," and that the first thing needful in these matters is "to understand what painting is as mere painting" (pp. 389, 440).[1] Ruskin's critics may say, if they like, that the technical standards he applied were mistaken; to say that he applied none at all is to state what is simply not the case. It is interesting to note that at the time when these critiques on the Academy appeared, an objection taken to them in the press was that they were too technical, and not sufficiently "literary." Thus one of the critics, in noticing the pamphlet of 1856, cites Ruskin's remarks about Holman Hunt's "Light of the World"—that "no one could sympathise more with the general feeling in it," but that "unless it had been accompanied with perfectly good nettle painting" he would never have praised it (p. 65); and then continues, "Let any one realise his own state of mind if he believed the Light of the world to be, indeed, before him; and if he thinks in that Blessed Presence he could have any eye for nettles, he will tolerate Mr. Ruskin's criticism, admire the temper of his mind, and think him a sound art critic: not otherwise."[2] So, again, another reviewer complained of Ruskin for making technical objections to a picture by Egg which was "so full of pointed narrative."[3]

In this connexion it is interesting to remark how in these Notes, as in other writings of the same or later date, Ruskin uses musical analogies to enforce his points. Thus in discussing the system of light and shade in a water-colour drawing by Fripp, he remarks that "treble notes must not be sharp and thin; the higher they are the more tender they must be, and in a certain sense the richer; it is the rich trebles that are sweet and precious" (p. 202).[4] In *The Elements of Drawing* (1856), and again in *The Two Paths* (1858), he constantly turns to music in order to illustrate artistic points, in the criticism of painting, which are best, or only, to be understood in terms of the sister art.[5] Those who imagine that Ruskin had no eye for the subtler harmonies of pictures as pictures would do well to consider these passages and to compare with them what he says about the essentially "decorative" art of Albert Moore (p. 272).

In the *Academy Notes*, as in the Turner Catalogues (compare Vol. XIII. p. xxxiii.) it may be noticed as characteristic of Ruskin that

[1] See also Ruskin's evidence before the Royal Academy Commission in 1863, p. 484, below.
[2] *The Guardian*, July 16, 1856.
[3] The *Art Journal*, August 1855, p. 238.
[4] See also pp. 199, 256, and compare Vol. VI. pp. 327, 328.
[5] Compare also a passage in the *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, below, p. 389.

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he can exhibit his powers on a small scale, and suggest great principles in words of noble eloquence on slight occasion. In a letter to his father, there is an interesting criticism by himself on the Notes for 1858:—

> "TURIN, *August* 11.—I think both Gambart and Mr. Richmond are right about the Notes this year. Gambart is right, in so far that as a critique, there is not so much of interest in it as usual, partly because I was hurried and tired; partly because there were no pictures to stimulate me. I was disappointed with everybody—Lewis, Carrick, Hughes, Morris, and Frère. I hadn't a single picture that I could get warm about. But Tom Richmond is right in so far as there are statements of principle in this number more clear and useful than any that I allow to go into the Notes usually;—reserving such things chiefly for *M. P.* The paragraph on Henri le Hon contains a principle which will be found of very great value eventually."

The passage referred to, on the principles of colour and tone, will here be found at p. 178. Among other characteristic passages in which some ultimate principle of criticism is pointedly enforced, reference may be made to p. 244, where one of Ruskin's central doctrines—that of the spiritual power of art—is finely expressed, and to p. 290, where he insists on the essentially national character of the historical art that is best worth having.

Ruskin's annual Notes attracted, as we have seen, much attention; and *Punch*, reflecting the public opinion of the day, published the following

> "POEM BY A PERFECTLY FURIOUS ACADEMICIAN.
>
> I takes and paints,
> Hears no complaints,
> And sells before I'm dry;
> Till savage Ruskin
> He sticks his tusk in,
> Then nobody will buy.
>
> *N.B.*—Confound Ruskin; only that won't come into poetry—but it's true."

The Notes were, as an artist of the time bears witness, "eagerly looked for and as eagerly purchased."[1] Artists, as we know, "never

[1] *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, by H. S. Marks, R.A., 1894, vol. ii. p. 163.

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read criticisms," but they somehow discover what the critics say. The pleasure of some who were favourably noticed, the wrath of those who were severely handled or (perhaps worse still) not mentioned at all, may be traced in several memoirs of the period. Men who had Ruskin's ear took measures to induce him to notice unregarded merit. The bitterness of those who dissented from his opinions may be judged from the tone of a criticism of the first number of *Academy Notes* in the *Quarterly Review* (March 1856: see below, p. 44 *n.*). In a lighter vein were various skits, in pen and pencil, prose and verse, which the Notes inspired. The skits were sometimes shown to Ruskin, and he enjoyed them. Among the authors of such skits was H. S. Marks, R.A., who owed to his parody of the Notes for the year 1856 a subsequent friendship with Ruskin.[1] Sir Edward Hamley also wrote a skit on "Mr. Dusky's" Notes,[2] and Ruskin had moreover many imitators as well as parodists.[3]

But the frankness of his criticisms was not appreciated or understood.[4] Ruskin did not allow his personal feelings to lead him either to hostile or to favourable prejudice. He played the part of Minos with severe impartiality: "strictly examining the crimes"[5] of all who entered the Academy. He had, as he claimed, the right to speak with authority; but it must be confessed that he sometimes spoke

[1] "The Notes for the year 1856 I made the subject of a little skit, with coloured caricatures of the pictures, and parodies of Mr. Ruskin's style in writing and critical views. I bound the few pages roughly together, for the thing never got beyond manuscript form. . . . At some gathering of artists Woolner told me that he had mentioned my brochure to Mr. Ruskin, who immediately expressed a wish to see it. I posted it to him the next morning, with an explanatory line or two, which was promptly acknowledged by the great writer, who thanked me for sending him the Notes, 'and still more for the compliment of you knowing I should enjoy them'" (*Pen and Pencil Sketches*, by H. S. Marks, R.A., 1894, ii. 164.)

[2] For particulars, see Bibliographical Note, below, p. 146; and for other skits pp. 4, 106 *n.*

[3] e.g., "*The Royal Academy Review. A Guide to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts, 1858, containing original, critical, and descriptive notices of upwards of 200 works of art.* By The Council of Four. Printed by Thomas F. A. Day, 13 Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn, 1858." This brochure (which contained a reference to Ruskin at p. iv.) was repeated in 1859 and 1860. Other publications of the kind followed. Of more interest was the pamphlet—"*Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition*, 1868, Part I. by W. M. Rossetti, Part II. by Algernon C. Swinburne."

[4] It did not, however, in all cases imperil private friendship: see the Epilogue to the 1883 edition of *Modern Painters*, vol. ii., where Ruskin gave some account of his relations with the Royal Academy. "It was certainly not the *Academy Notes* of after years, but the Pre-Raphaelite schism, and most of all Turner's death, which broke my relations with the Royal Academy. I hope they may in future be kinder; its President [Leighton] has just lent me two lovely drawings for the Oxford schools, and, I think, feels with me as to all the main principles of Art Education."

[5] *Inferno*, v. 4.

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also with arrogance. As, for instance, in the passage added to the first number, where he says that when he has attacked a picture it will hereafter be found that "the worst policy which the friends of the artist can possibly adopt will be to defend it."[1] Nor can it have been any comfort to artists thus attacked to learn that he never said half what he could say in dispraise. Among the artists thus chastened was David Roberts, R.A. "Feeling, perhaps," says an Academician with much sympathy, "that Roberts might find it difficult to reconcile an attempt to do him a serious injury with the usual interpretation of the term friendship, the critic wrote a private note to the artist, explaining his action on the hypothesis of a self-imposed duty to the public, and concluded his note by the expression of a hope that severe criticism would not interfere with the sincere feeling of friendship which the writer hoped would always exist," etc., etc. To this Roberts replied that the first time he met the critic he would give him a *sound thrashing;* and he ventured to "'hope that a broken head would not interfere with the sincere feeling of friendship which he hoped would always exist," etc., etc.[2] "D—— the fellow," exclaimed one young artist, "why doesn't he back his friends?" After 1859 the Notes were suspended. "Thenceforward," Ruskin explained, "it seemed to me useless, so far as artists were concerned, to continue criticism which they would esteem dishonourable unless it was false" (p. 261). Probably another reason for the discontinuance of the Notes may be found in the fact that at this time Ruskin's thoughts were in large measure diverted from art to ethics and economics. "Remember," he wrote, "that it is not so much in *buying* pictures, as in *being* pictures, that you can encourage a noble school."[3] "It is the vainest of affectations," he says again, "to try and put beauty into shadows, while all real things that cast them are left in deformity and pain."[4] In 1859 Ruskin was busily engaged in finishing *Modern Painters*, and afterwards turning to the problem of social reconstruction, wrote, instead of more *Academy Notes*, *Unto this Last* and *Munera Pulveris*.

In 1875, however, the publication of *Academy Notes* was resumed for that year only, and only the Exhibition of the Royal Academy itself was noticed. Ruskin had, on a first inspection, been so much pleased with some of the pictures of the year that he determined to write "an entirely good-humoured sketch" of modern English painting (p. 265).

[1] See below, p. 35, and compare *Two Paths*, Appendix i.
[2] *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*, by W. P. Frith, R.A., 1887, vol. i. p. 128.
[3] *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 137.
[4] *Catalogue of the Educational Series*, p. 25.

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In this resolve, he found it impossible to persevere; it was much more nearly achieved eight years later in the Oxford course of lectures on *The Art of England*. Further inspection of the Exhibition made it appear typical to him of tendencies in modern life and thought which it was his prerogative to chastise. It was in this mood that, in writing to Mr. Wedderburn, he said, "The R. A. Exhibition is so important that I must write a 'Notes' upon it as I used to do." After all, whatever theories of their function may be entertained by artists, their work cannot but be in a measure both didactic and historical; didactic, in that for good or evil it stimulates the fancy or directs the thoughts of spectators; historical, in that it corresponds to the feelings and interests of the time. It was from this point of view that Ruskin found the Exhibition of 1875 particularly instructive, and this explains the different form into which his Notes were now thrown. He did not take the reader round the rooms in order, but grouped the notable pictures under various heads according to their subject-matter (see p. 265). That he enjoyed his work, and was satisfied with "the devil" he put into it, appears from one of the familiar letters to his publisher-friend, Mr. F. S. Ellis, here reprinted in Appendix I. (p. 458). "There's a nice spicy flavour in it now, I think—as a whole—quite a 'loving cup' for the Academy." And in a similar vein he wrote to Mr. Allen, "These *Academy Notes* will have some sting in them at any rate; they have cost me dreadful trouble." Just as in Carlyle, the judicious reader makes some mental allowance for the sardonic humour of that artist in vituperation, so Ruskin's work will never be rightly understood except by those who remember that there was in him, and especially in his later writings, a certain element of elfish humour.

Most of the numbers of *Academy Notes* ran through several editions, of which account is given in the bibliographical notes here prefixed to the several catalogues (pp. 4, 42, 90, 146, 208, 260). The *text* adopted in this collection is that of the last and most complete edition of each pamphlet.

In 1885 an index to the six numbers of *Academy Notes*, compiled by Mr. John Morgan of Aberdeen, was printed for private circulation (second edition, 1890). This index was useful, but far from complete. In the present volume references to all painters and pictures mentioned in the *Academy Notes* are included in a List (pp. 313–323). It is given here because such an index has already been in circulation, and because there is some interest in bringing together thus in a separate form, instead of merging in a general index to all Ruskin's works, the

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artists whom he selected for notice in these critiques. The topics discussed in the volume will of course be found entered in the General Index to the edition.

Of the Notes of 1855 and 1856, no *manuscripts* or proof-sheets have been seen by the editors. Of those of 1857, there are the proof-sheets of parts; of those of 1858, there is the MS. of parts at the beginning and at the end; and of those of 1859, there is the MS. of the greater part. All these are in Mr. Allen's possession. Of the Notes of 1875, four manuscript sheets (containing a first draft of pp. 263–267 in this edition) are in the possession of Mr. Wedderburn. There are no variations of special interest, but the MSS. and proof-sheets bear, as usual, abundant evidence of the care with which Ruskin weighed his words. This may be seen in the facsimile of a page of the MS. here given between pp. 214 and 215.

## II

In the Second Part of this volume are collected some scattered critiques on painters, draughtsmen, and engravers. First come two letters of 1858 on the Pre-Raphaelites (pp. 327–331). These letters belong to a further stage in the history of the Pre-Raphaelite movement than that which we have already followed (Vol. XII. pp. xliii.–xlix.). Ruskin's defence of Millais and Holman Hunt in 1851 did much, as we have seen, to turn the current of criticism. Hunt's "Valentine and Sylvia," ridiculed and abused in the London press, was awarded a £50 prize by the Academy of Liverpool. The same Academy gave steadfast encouragement to the new school, awarding its annual prize during the next six years to one or other of its members. The prize in 1857 was awarded to Millais's "Blind Girl," which had been exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1856.[1] The award, and the general policy of the Liverpool Academy, in favouring the "Pre-Raphaelite heresy," exposed it to much hostile criticism in the press, and to some internal dissensions. Among the members of the Academy and the judges for the prize was Mr. Alfred Hunt, who wrote to Ruskin on the matter, begging his intervention. Ruskin's reply was then sent by Hunt for publication in the Liverpool press.

An appreciation of the Outlines of John Leech follows (pp. 332–334). This was written for a catalogue of an exhibition which was held in 1872. The exhibition consisted of some hundreds of the more finished tracings

[1] Ruskin's discussion of this picture will be found in *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 4.

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which Leech made from his first sketches for the purpose of transferring the drawings to the woodblock, before working up their detail for the engraver. "The Family," it was explained in a preface to the catalogue, "contemplate disposing of them upon the condition of their being kept together—selections from them being distributed to schools and public colleges of art by means of photography." A Committee was formed for promoting this object, and Ruskin was a member of it. The object was not attained, and the outlines were dispersed. Many of Leech's drawings were bought by Ruskin and presented to his Museum at Sheffield.

The next piece, written for *The Architect* in 1873 (pp. 335–338), contains an appreciation of the etchings of Mr. Ernest George.

The letters on Frederick Walker, A.R.A., which follow (pp. 339–348), were written, as will be seen, to his friend H. Stacy Marks, R.A., who had been active in promoting an exhibition of Walker's works in 1876, the year after the artist's death.

The paper which comes next (pp. 349–356) requires some notice here, as the talented engraver, Arthur Burgess, with whom it deals, was for several years closely associated with Ruskin. Burgess was an engraver employed in wood-cutting for the *Illustrated London News*, and was first brought into relation with Ruskin through Miss Octavia Hill. Ruskin describes in this paper Burgess's first appeal to him for help and the response it met with. He was struck from the first, as he told Mr. Allen, with "the splendid cadence of line"[1] in Burgess's work. Ruskin set him to work on making drawings, to be afterwards engraved, of botanical subjects. A few of the blocks thus drawn and cut by Burgess, were printed in *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, accompanying Ruskin's memorial article, and are here included. Many others exist, and some are given in this edition as additional plates in *Proserpina*. Several drawings by Burgess are also in the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford. At first Ruskin employed him for half his time; afterwards he became a regular whole-time assistant, drawing an annual salary from Ruskin. The story of the relations between master and assistant is partly told in Ruskin's paper. An additional anecdote is given by Mr. Selwyn Image, to whose pen we may also attribute the personal recollections embodied in Ruskin's article (p. 352):—

"I know from his own lips and writing what Ruskin's deliberate opinion was as to the merit of his assistant's work—he held it in its way incomparable.

[1] Ruskin, says Mr. Allen, repeatedly used this phrase in speaking of Burgess's work.

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But I well remember Burgess telling me how, in the early days of their connection, Ruskin was in the habit of coming into his room, when he was starting on, or had got some little way with, an enlarged cartoon for a lecture: and how if Ruskin did not see in the drawing at that early stage indication of the particular qualities he set store by, nothing would satisfy him with it; and he would count it a failure to the last. So often did this happen, and so embarrassing did it become, that at last Burgess plucked up courage and one day said, 'Sir, I am going to ask a favour of you. I think when you have once explained to me what you want in a drawing I can mostly get it for you. But sometimes what you want cannot be had till the drawing nears completion—and at any rate I can only get it my own way. Will you do me this favour of never coming in to look at the thing till I can show it you finished?' Ruskin knew his man, at once consented, and loyally kept his promise. There were few occasions after that on which he had to find fault with Burgess's drawings." [1]

Ruskin's admiration for his assistant's work steadily increased, and for a time Burgess was on terms of close friendship with him. In the end, Ruskin lost sight of him; and Burgess's life ended unhappily. "He did foolish and, it may be, unworthy things," says the writer just quoted, but all who came in contact with him were attracted not only by his high talents, but by many lovable traits in his nature.

The last piece in the Second Part of this volume (pp. 357–363) follows naturally after the preceding papers, being a series of thoughts and impressions on engraving and other "black arts." The paper appeared in *The Magazine of Art* for January 1888, and is among the last pieces which Ruskin wrote.

## III

The Third Part of this volume contains a reprint of Ruskin's *Notes on Prout and Hunt*. These were written to illustrate a Loan Collection of Drawings, in part arranged by Ruskin, at the Fine Art Society's Galleries in the winter of 1879–1880. The reader comparing these Notes with those of the previous year on the Turner Drawings (Vol. XIII.) will be struck at once by the greater quietness of tone and more systematic treatment which characterise the later of the two catalogues. Ruskin had recovered from the illness which attacked him during the Turner Exhibition. There was perhaps, too, something in the modest art of Samuel Prout and William Hunt, and in the happy recollections

[1] "Personal Recollections of John Ruskin," a paper read before the Ruskin Union, June 25, 1903, and printed in *St. George*, vol. vi. pp. 296–297.



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which it prompted, that induced in the author a mood of greater equanimity. In arranging their drawings his mind was carried back to the exhibitions, during his early manhood, at the Old Water-Colour Society (see p. 389). Those exhibitions, he writes elsewhere, "presented an aggregate of unaffected pleasantness and truth, the like of which, if you could now see, after a morning spent among the enormities of luscious and exotic art which frown or glare along your miles of exhibition wall, would really be felt by you to possess the charm of a bouquet of bluebells and cowslips, amidst a prize show of cactus and orchid from the hothouses of Kew. The root of this delightfulness was an extremely rare sincerity in the personal pleasure which all these men took, not in their own pictures but in the *subjects* of them—a form of enthusiasm which, while it was as simple, was also as romantic, in the best sense, as the sentiment of a young girl; and whose nature I can the better both define and certify to you, because it was the impulse to which I owed the best force of my own life."[1] The qualities of the art which Ruskin was analysing in these *Notes* passed into his own mood. In the *Notes on Prout and Hunt* there is something of the same limpid ease of mind and style which characterises *Præterita*.

It was indeed happy "scenes and thoughts" in his past life which the collection of Prout's and Hunt's drawings recalled to Ruskin. Samuel Prout (1783–1852) was a friend of Ruskin's father. His drawings were among the earliest with which Ruskin himself was familiar, and served as the models for his own first exercises in art. Prout was a constant guest at the dinner-party on Ruskin's birthday, and at Herne Hill and Denmark Hill they had him for a neighbour. "He went home to De-Crespigny Terrace from Denmark Hill one evening, seeming perfectly well and happy;—and we saw him no more."[2] The references to Prout in Ruskin's writings are, as might thus be expected, very numerous. In the earlier volumes, as in the later, of *Modern Painters*, Prout is mentioned as pre-eminent in his own line. Prout's letter to Ruskin's father, written after the publication of that volume, has already been mentioned, and Ruskin's letter to Prout given.[3]

[1] *The Art of England*, § 159.

[2] "On Monday, 9th [February, 1852]," wrote Ruskin's father, "we had Oldfield (Newton was in Wales), Harrison, George Richmond, Tom, Dr. Grant, and Samuel Prout. The latter I never saw in such spirits, and he went away much satisfied. Yesterday at church we were told that he came home very happy, ascended to his painting-room, and in a quarter of an hour from his leaving our cheerful house was a corpse, from apoplexy. He never spoke after the fit came on. He had always wished for a sudden death."—Collingwood's *Life and Work of John Ruskin* (1900), p. 137. Ruskin's reply to this letter has been given in Vol. X. p. 301 n.

[3] Vol. III. pp. xlii., 662.

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In 1849 Ruskin contributed to *The Art Journal* an account of Prout's life and work (reprinted in Vol. XII. pp. 305–315), and in *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851) he noticed the happy coincidence of Prout's special powers and interests (his short-sightedness notwithstanding) with the close of the great war (*ibid.*, p. 362). In *The Stones of Venice* (1851–1853) many other references to Prout will be found. In *The Elements of Drawing* (1857) his sketches are included among "things to be studied" by every young artist, for their "unrivalled power of composition and love and feeling of architectural subject." Again, in the lecture on "The Unity of Art" (1859), now included in *The Two Paths*, Ruskin gave another short summary of Prout's life and characteristics, and so also in one of his later lectures at Oxford (*The Eagle's Nest*, §§ 86, 87). These passages, and especially the separate essay on Prout, should be read in connection with the present *Notes*.

With William Hunt, also, Ruskin had long been on terms of familiar friendship, and Hunt's work had always strongly appealed to his sympathies. William Henry Hunt, of the Old Water-Colour Society, was born in 1790 and died in 1864. Ruskin's father had bought many of his drawings. The breakfast-room at Denmark Hill, "opening on the lawn and farther fields, was extremely pretty," says Ruskin, "when the walls were mostly covered with lakes by Turner and doves by Hunt" (*Præterita*, ii. ch. viii.). Hunt's drawings were among Ruskin's selected standards of excellence in his latest as well as his earliest books; and he had commissioned the artist to execute a series of studies for presentation to Schools of Art.[1] In the first volume of *Modern Painters*, Hunt's "keen eye for truth" was noticed, and in later volumes other characteristics were noticed. In one of the two articles which he contributed to the *Quarterly Review* in 1847–1848 Ruskin referred to Hunt's brilliant colour (Vol. XII. p. 288). In the pamphlet on *Pre-Raphaelitism* his power and aims were noticed with sympathetic praise (*ibid.*, p. 361), while in *The Elements of Drawing* he was pronounced "the best painter of still life that ever existed," and his methods were commended to the imitation of students (§§ 175, 256 *n.*). A letter has been preserved from Mr. Ruskin senior to his son, describing a visit to "old Hunt," as he was familiarly called:—

"I like the little Elshie," he says, nicknaming him after the Black Dwarf, for Hunt was somewhat deformed; "he is softened and humanised. There is a gentleness and a greater *bonhomie*—less reserve. I had sent him *Pre-Raphaelitism*. He had marked it very much with pencil. He greatly likes

[1] See below, p. 441.

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your notice of people not keeping to their last. So many clever artists, he says, have been ruined by not acting on your principles." [1]

Ruskin had indeed praised the old painter for his honesty, earnestness, and constancy. Yet he regretted that "the last" was always of the same pattern. The passage in *Pre-Raphaelitism*, where Ruskin remarks that Hunt was meant to do something else in the world than "paint bouquets in china vases," should be read as supplementing the estimate of Hunt contained in the following pages, both in *Academy Notes* and in the *Notes on Prout and Hunt*.

The *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, in their original form, passed through four editions, as noted on p. 369. The *text* adopted in this volume is that of the fourth, the variations being noted either under the text or in the Bibliographical Note.

The *manuscript* of the Preface (§§ 1–40, and § 44) is at Brantwood; it consists of thirty sheets of ruled foolscap. Several of the variations are here noticed (see, *e.g.*, pp. 375, 390, 393, 397), and a page of the MS. is given in facsimile (pp. 376–377).

The Appendix contains a collection of minor letters, speeches, and notes on subjects cognate to the rest of the volume.

In Appendix I. are given some letters referring to *Academy Notes* (1855, 1875) which have previously been printed (for private circulation), and are therefore here included.

Appendix II. contains letters addressed by Ruskin to James Smetham (1854–1871) under circumstances explained in an accompanying note (p. 460). Smetham was grateful for Ruskin's encouragement, and sincerely admired both his character and his writings, as many a passage in his published letters shows—letters which are full of "melancholy grace, Brought from a pensive, though a happy place."

In Appendix III. are reports of speeches made by Ruskin (1857) on the Pre-Raphaelite painter, Thomas Seddon, in connexion with the memorial fund which was collected after the artist's untimely death.

These speeches, as well as the letters to Smetham, are typical of the friendly and helpful encouragement which Ruskin gave to so many earnest workers both in art and literature. The next series of letters (Appendix IV.) are addressed to Watts (1860–1866). They are interesting in themselves, and do honour, as is remarked by Mrs. Richmond Ritchie (from whose pages they are here reprinted), to "the candour and love of truth," alike of the writer and of the recipient.

[1] *The Life of John Ruskin*, by W. G. Collingwood, 1900, p. 136. For the "notice of people not keeping to their last," see Vol. XII. pp. 346–348.

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In Appendix V. is a letter on a technical matter—the reflection of rainbows in water, which was called forth by a criticism on a drawing in one of the exhibitions of 1861. The subject of reflections in water was one to which Ruskin had given much attention. His keen and accurate observation had caused him to detect many errors in pictorial representations of these phenomena, and "Truth of Water" was one of the tests which he applied to the work of Turner as compared with that of other painters (Section v. in the first volume of *Modern Painters*). He replied at some length to criticisms of that section, and returned to the subject in *The Harbours of England* and *The Elements of Drawing*.[1] The theory of the matter also interested him, from his fondness for geometrical exercises—as may be seen in the appendix here.

The next Appendix (VI.) contains the evidence given by Ruskin in 1863 to the Royal Academy Commission; it is by no means out of date. "The only evidence of the lot," wrote Rossetti after perusing the Report, "which is worth reading as original thought and insight, is Ruskin's."[2]

The letters on Modern Caricature (1883, 1888) in Appendix VII. should be read in connexion with Ruskin's other writings on the same subject: see the note on p. 490.

Appendix VIII. contains some remarks on the Art of Mezzotint (1884), and Appendix IX., a letter on the Nude in Art (1885).

The Notes on Millais (1886) in Appendix X. have already been mentioned (above, p. xxii.).

In Appendix XI. some other minor notes on various artists and exhibitions are collected.

The *illustrations* to the volume are of various kinds, corresponding with the nature of its contents. (1) First, there are four plates giving reproductions of pictures which are discussed in *Academy Notes*. Many of the pictures selected by Ruskin for special notice are well known from engravings or are accessible in public galleries; those here reproduced are comparatively little known. The frontispiece is "Val d'Aosta," by John Brett, A.R.A.—a picture (now in the possession of

[1] See Vol. III. pp. 494 *seq.*, and pp. 655–661; Vol. XIII. p. 74; and *Elements of Drawing* (Vol. XV.), §§ 141 *seq.*, 249, 250. The subject has recently been treated in a monograph by Sir Montagu Pollock entitled *Light and Water; a Study of Reflexion and Colour in River, Lake, and Sea* (George Bell and Sons, 1903). "The present writer's own pursuit of the subject," says the author, referring to Ruskin's chapters, "though followed along a somewhat different line, has yet only served to increase his admiration of the great teacher's marvellous insight and power of observation."

[2] *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham*, 1897, p. 269.

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Mr. R. P. Cooper) which is copiously noticed in this volume (see pp. xxiii., 172, 234, 238 *n.*, 293). Plate I. is "Burd Helen," by W. L. Windus—a picture to which Ruskin attached particular importance in the Pre-Raphaelite school (see pp. 85, 233, 330, 331). Plate II. is "Sir Isumbras at the Ford," by Millais—another picture which Ruskin discussed at length (pp. 106–111); it is in the possession of Mr. R. H. Benson. These three plates have been made, by photogravure, from the original pictures, by kind permission of the owners. Plate III.—one of the pictures by Frère especially praised by Ruskin (pp. 142, 348)—has been made from an early proof of the engraving after the picture by W. H. Simmons.

The next two Plates (IV. and V.) are woodcuts by Arthur Burgess; they are of botanical studies made by him for Ruskin, as described below (p. 350). These woodcuts were first published in *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, vol. iii., on three plates (facing pp. 48, 50, 52); they have here been rearranged to suit the size of this edition. Most of the plants are copied from plates in *Icones Plantarum Floræ Danicæ* (see Vol. XIII. p. 530 *n.*). Thus on Plate IV. the woodcut on the left is of Primula Veris Officinalis, and the upper one in the middle is of Lychnis Alpina (both in vol. i. of that work). On Plate V. the woodcut on the left is of Lychnis Apetala (vol. v.); and that on the right, of Ophrys Spiralis (vol. iii.); the other woodcuts are from drawings by Ruskin. Another woodcut by Burgess—done from an illuminated MS. in Ruskin's library—is here inserted in the text (p. 350).

The next series of Plates (VI.–XXII.) illustrate the "Notes on Prout." First comes a Portrait of Prout (Plate VI.), by William Hunt. Of Prout's own drawings, twelve are here reproduced (Plates VIII.–XI., XIII.–XX.), all of them being the subject of special notice by Ruskin. An illustrated edition of the *Notes on Prout and Hunt* was issued in 1880, as described below (p. 370). The issue was not published by Ruskin, nor was he responsible for the illustrations, which were in autotype. They included (besides Hunt's portrait of Prout, here also given) fifteen of Prout's drawings; of these it has been found practicable to give ten here in photogravure, while two more drawings, which are at Brantwood, are also included. The twelve here given are of Amiens (see pp. 392, 410), Abbeville (pp. 395, 406, 410, 413), Como (pp. 397, 426, 431), Calais (pp. 402, 405, 408), Evreux (pp. 396, 410), Strassburg (pp. 396, 401, 410, 415), Lisieux (pp. 414, 415), Antwerp (pp. 396, 418), Domo d'Ossola (pp. 396, 419, 422, 431), the Monument of Can Signorio * (pp. 391, 423), Ducal Palace (p. 424), and the St.

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Jean d'Acre Columns* (pp. 403, 427); those marked with an asterisk are added in this edition.

In the same section of the volume are given four plates of subjects selected from the "Supplementary Drawings," etc., which Ruskin included in the Prout Exhibition. One of these (Plate VII.) is a photograph by Ruskin of a Courtyard at Abbeville, to which he refers both in this volume and elsewhere in his works (see below, p. 388, and the references there given). Another Plate (XXII.) is a Study of Oak-leaves by Ruskin (see p. 436); the drawing, which is at Sheffield, is in water-colour ($9 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$). The other two plates in this division of the volume are drawings by Ruskin of subjects treated also by Prout —Calais (XII.) and the St. Jean d'Acre Pillars, Venice (XXI.): for Ruskin's references to these two drawings of his, see pp. 408, 427. The inclusion here of Prout's drawing of the Monument of Can Signorio will enable the reader to institute another comparison between Prout's work and Ruskin's, for Ruskin's drawing of the same subject has been given in Vol. XI. (Plate B, p. 90). The drawing of Calais was given by Ruskin to his friend, the late Dr. John Brown, whose son lent it to the publisher for reproduction in this volume. It is in pencil and wash on toned paper ($12 \times 7$). The drawing of the St. Jean d'Acre Pillars is in water-colour ($6 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$), purple and blue picked out with white on purple paper. It is in the British Museum. "A very characteristic example," says the *Guide*, "of Mr. Ruskin's remarkable power of eye and hand in expressing the detail and character of sculptured ornament. He loved the colour purple, and has translated the material of these columns into that colour for his pleasure."[1]

The remaining five plates in this volume refer to William Hunt. Plate XXIII. is a characteristic portrait of the artist, founded on a photograph in possession of Mr. Allen. The other four plates are reproductions of drawings by Hunt. The Illustrated Edition of the Notes (1880) also gave four drawings by Hunt. One of them is included in our four—the "Bird's Nest and May Blossom," which is at Brantwood (Plate XXVI.). The drawing of "Plums" (Plate XXV.) is also at Brantwood. "The Eavesdropper" (Plate XXIV.) is in the possession of Mr. E. F. Quilter, and "The Blessing" (Plate XXVII.) in that of Mr. James Orrock. The drawings are here reproduced in photogravure by kind permission of the owners.

E. T. C.

[1] *Guide to an Exhibition of Drawings and Sketches by . . . deceased Artists of the English School, principally acquired between 1895 and 1901.* Printed by order of the Trustees, 1901, p. 61.

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# PART I

# ACADEMY NOTES

## (1855–1859 AND 1875)



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I

# NOTES

## ON SOME OF

# THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF

# THE ROYAL ACADEMY

1855

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MODERN PAINTERS"

*WITH A SUPPLEMENT*

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 65 CORNHILL
1855

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[*Bibliographical Note.*—Of the first number of Ruskin's *Academy Notes* there were three editions, as follow :—

*First Edition* (1855).—The title-page was as shown here (p. 3), except that the words "With a Supplement" were omitted. An octavo pamphlet, stitched and without wrappers, pp. 30. Half-title, with imprint on the reverse ("London : A. and G. A. Spottiswoode, New Street Square"), pp. 1–2; title-page, with blank reverse, pp. 3–4; preface (here pp. 5–6), pp. 5–6; text of the notes, pp. 7–30. No headlines, the pages being numbered centrally. At the end two pages of advertisements of "Works by Mr. Ruskin" were inserted. Issued on June 1, 1855; price Sixpence.

*Second Edition* (1855).—This has the words "Second Edition" added to the title-page, but is otherwise a verbatim reprint of the First. Issued on June 18.

*Third Edition* (1855).—The words "Third Edition. With a Supplement" were added to the title-page; the Supplement occupied ten additional pages (31–40); and the two pages of advertisements were omitted; otherwise the pamphlet was identical with the two previous editions. Issued on July 1.

*Reprinted* in 1902 in *Ruskin on Pictures*, vol. ii. pp. 1–34. The first volume of that collection has been described at Vol. XIII. p. 93. The title-page of the second was the same except for the substitution of the words: "Vol. II. | Academy Notes | Notes on Prout and Hunt." Crown 8vo, pp. xviii. + 375. The Preface by the editor (E. T. Cook) occupies pp. v.–xiii.; Contents, pp. xv.–xvi.; List of Plates, pp. xvii.–xviii.; the Text of Academy Notes, pp. 1–264; Notes on Prout and Hunt, pp. 271–350; General Index, pp. 351–375. There are editorial notes under the text, and on pp. 265–270 "Some Further Notes on Millais" (collected from Ruskin's other works); the substance of these, as well as of the editor's preface, is incorporated in the present volume. Issued (December 22, 1902) in the usual green cloth, price 7s. 6d. net (2000 copies printed).

The publication of the *Notes* in 1855 inspired the production of a privately-printed pamphlet (8vo, pp. 61) in verse. The title-page is :—

> Notes | on so much of The Catalogue of the present | Exhibition of the Royal Academy | as relates to the | Works of the Members | with a Report of the | Private View | and the | Dinner | 1855 | (*Not published*).

In the Introduction the anonymous author attacks "Buskin"; the following lines will show the style :—

> "Though Buskin has put forth his Fiat
> In fair poetic prose,
> Yet Buskin has new lamps to shy at
> Which some small stones I now let fly at."

Reviews appeared in *The Globe*, June 18 (see below, p. 34); the *Art Journal*, July, N.S., vol. i. p. 219, and August, *ibid.*, pp. 237–239 (a very fierce review); the *Quarterly Review*, March 1856, vol. 98, pp. 384–433 (an article on *Modern Painters* also : see below, p. 44).]

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# PREFACE

I AM often asked by my friends to mark for them the pictures in the Exhibitions of the year which appear to me the most interesting, either in their good qualities or their failure. I have determined, at last, to place the circular letter which on such occasions I am obliged to write, within reach of the general public. Twenty years of severe labour,[1] devoted exclusively to the study of the principles of Art, have given me the right to speak on the subject with a measure of confidence; but it will be found that in the following pages, few statements are made on my own authority, and that I have limited myself to pointing out simple facts with respect to each picture, leaving to the reader the power of verifying such statements for himself. No criticism is of any value which does not enable the spectator, in his own person, to understand, or to detect, the alleged merit or unworthiness of the picture; and the true work of a critic is not to make his hearer believe him, but agree with him.

Whatever may be their abstract truth, the following remarks have at least in them the virtue of *entire* impartiality. Among the painters whose works are spoken of, the greater number are absolutely unknown to me; some are my friends, and some quite other than friends. But the reader would be strangely deceived who, from the tone of the criticism, should endeavour to guess to which class the painter belonged. It might, indeed, be alleged that there is some unfairness in fastening on the faults of one or two works, not grosser in error than many around them; but

[1] [He thus calculates from 1835 when he was 16. He wrote the reply to *Blackwood*, in defence of Turner, in 1836: see Vol. III. p. 635.]



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it would have been tedious to expose all the fallacies in the Academy, and I believe it will be found, besides, that the notice of the particular picture is nearly always justified, if not by excess of demerit, at least by excess of pretension.

I have been hindered, by unforeseen pressure of work,[1] from noticing, this year, any but pictures in the Academy, and have perhaps missed several there which ought to have been favourably distinguished; but I hope henceforward to furnish, every year, in the same form, some notes on the leading pictures in all the Exhibitions, which may be of use in guiding the public to the discernment and acceptance of those unobtrusive truths of which our modern Idealism has so long repressed the pursuit, and withheld the appreciation.

*May 29th*, 1855.

[1] [Principally, his teaching at the Working Men's College: see Vol. V. p. xxxviii., and see *ibid.*, pp. xlix.–li.]

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# NOTES, ETC.

35. AZALEAS. (*Miss A. F. Mutrie.*[1])

There are two other works by this artist in the rooms, Nos. 304 ["Primula and Rhododendron"] and 306 ["Orchids"]. It would be well to examine them at once in succession, lest they should afterwards be passed carelessly when the mind has been interested by pictures of higher aim; for all these flower paintings are remarkable for very lovely, pure, and yet unobtrusive colour—perfectly tender, and yet luscious—(note the purple rose leaves especially), and a richness of petal texture that seems absolutely scented. The arrangement is always graceful—the backgrounds sometimes too faint. I wish this very accomplished artist would paint some banks of flowers in wild country, just as they grow, as she appears slightly in danger of falling into too artificial methods of grouping.

68. EL PASEO, the property of Her Majesty the Queen. (*J. Phillip.*[2])

[1] [Miss Annie Feray Mutrie (1826–1893) studied at the Manchester School of Design, then under the direction of George Wallis. She first exhibited at the Academy in 1851. She was younger sister of Miss M. D. Mutrie (see p. 54).]

[2] [John Phillip (1817–1867) went to Spain for the sake of his health in 1851, and thenceforward made a speciality of Spanish subjects. He was elected A.R.A. in 1857 and R.A. in 1859. His work had for some years attracted the favour of the Court, and he painted several ceremonial pictures by command. This picture of "The Promenade" now hangs in the King's private rooms at Windsor Castle. A characteristic example of Phillip's Spanish subjects may be seen in the Tate Gallery, No. 1534, "The Promenade."]



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76. Mrs. Coleridge. (*W. Boxall, A.*[1])

The juxtaposition of these two pictures looks very like deliberate malice; but it may read an excellent lesson to the two artists. Mr. Phillip's fault is excess of decision and force; Mr. Boxall's, excess of delicacy and tenderness. Mr. Phillip's work, by the contrast, has become vulgar, and Mr. Boxall's evanescent.

Looked at separately, there is much merit in both paintings; but the truth, so painfully brought out, is still a truth with respect to both. Mr. Phillip has much to subdue, and much to refine, before he will be able to represent not merely the piquancy, but the wayward, half melancholy mystery of Spanish beauty; and Mr. Boxall has much to complete, much to *de*fine, before he can hope that his graceful idea of the English lady will be in anywise justly expressed. The same may be said of all his works in this exhibition. Refined in expression, though in some cases looking too stiffly straightforward, the faces he paints are still little more than shadows—the reflection of the truth in a cloudy mirror. The dresses are even less than this; in fact nothing more than a filling of the canvas with vague sweeps of the brush, issuing, when there is any momentary distinctness, in pure fallacy; as in the portrait before us, where the shadow of the chain on the neck, which, to accord with the faintness of the rest of the drawing, should have been so tender as hardly to be perceived, is nearly as black as the chain itself—and this equally on the flesh tint and on the white dress!

Mr. Boxall will never satisfy himself, nor do his real talents justice, until he is content to paint, unaffectedly, as far as he is able, things as they are. It is not time nor labour that is wanting: there are as many touches on this

[1] [Sir William Boxall (1800–1879) was elected A.R.A. in 1852 and R.A. in 1864. He was Director of the National Gallery from 1865 to 1874, and was knighted in 1871. In *Præterita* (ii. ch. vii. § 143), Ruskin describes conversations at Venice in 1845 with Boxall, "a much-regarded friend."]

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ghostly gown as there are on one of Velasquez's portraits, head and all, which looks living enough to stalk the next moment into the middle of the room.

77. COLIN.[1] (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

There is a sweet feeling in this choice of landscape subject, as in most of the other works of this painter. The execution is flimsy and imperfect, and must be much bettered before his pictures can rank as works of any importance. He has, however, a very interesting figure-subject in the middle room, of which more in its place.[2]

78. THE WRESTLING IN "AS YOU LIKE IT." (*D. Maclise, R.A.*[3])

Very bad pictures may be divided into two principal classes—those which are weakly or passively bad, and which are to be pitied and passed by; and those which are energetically or actively bad, and which demand severe reprobation, as wilful transgressions of the laws of all good art. The picture before us is of the last class. Mr. Maclise

[1] [A figure in a landscape, called in the catalogue "Colin thou kenst, the southerne shepheard's boye" (from Spenser's "Shepheards' Calender"). Of Mr. Hook's work in later years Ruskin wrote with increasing appreciation (see pp. 102, 228). In *Modern Painters*, he said that "the designs of J. C. Hook are, perhaps, the only works of the kind in existence which deserve to be mentioned in connection with the pastorals of Wordsworth and Tennyson" (vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 23). In the Academy of 1871 he "found nothing deserving of notice otherwise [than in condemnation], except Mr. Hook's always pleasant sketches from fisher-life, and Mr. Pettie's graceful and powerful, though too slightly painted, study from Henry IV." (*Aratra Pentelici*, preface). See also *Art of England*, § 209. Mr. Hook, born in 1819, was elected A.R.A. in 1851, R.A. in 1860. He is represented in the Tate Gallery by four pictures, Nos. 1512–1514 and 1598.]

[2] [See p. 25.]

[3] [Daniel Maclise (1806–1870) was the popular artist of his time; his vogue may be gathered alike from the acres of canvas which he was commissioned to paint, and from the appreciation of contemporaries (see, *e.g.*, Mr. Frith's *Autobiography*, vol. i. ch. xi.). He was elected A.R.A. in 1834 and R.A. in 1840; in 1865 he declined the Presidency. Ruskin was not among his admirers; "nothing," he wrote in *Modern Painters*, "can more completely demonstrate the total ignorance of the public of all that is great or valuable in Shakespeare than their universal admiration of Maclise's 'Hamlet'" (Vol. III. p. 82 *n.*; see also pp. 51 *n.*, 619 *n.*). Maclise is represented in the Tate Gallery by Nos. 422 and 423; in the National Portrait Gallery by a portrait of Dickens; and by three pictures in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum. For a notice of his work in the Houses of Parliament, see below, pp. 473, 488.]

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has keen sight, a steady hand, good anatomical knowledge of the human form, and good experience of the ways of the world. If he draws ill, or imagines ungracefully, it is because he is resolved to do so. He has seen enough of society to know how a Duke generally sits—how a young lady generally looks at a strange youth who interests her; and it is by vulgar choice, not vulgar ignorance, that he makes the enthroned Duke straddle like a village actor, and the young lady express her interest by a cool, unrestrained, and steady stare. It is not worth while to analyze the picture thoroughly, but let us glance at the two opponent figures—Charles and Orlando. The spectator can certainly see nothing in this "Charles" but a grim, sinister, sinewy monster, wholly devoid of all gentleness or humanity. Was Shakespeare's Charles such an one? So far from it, that into his mouth is put the first description of the love of Rosalind and Celia—"The Duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, being ever from their cradles bred together, that she would have followed her exile, or have died to stay behind her—never two ladies loved as they do." So far from it, that he comes to Oliver especially to warn him against allowing his brother to wrestle with him. "Your brother is but young and tender; for your love, I would be loath to foil him." Then, on Oliver's execrable slander of Orlando, poor honest Charles is "heartily glad I came hither; if he come to-morrow, I'll give him his payment"; this being not in cruelty, but in honest indignation at Orlando's ascribed villainy; nevertheless, when the trial comes, although flushed with victory, and haughty in his supposed strength, there is no bitterness in his question—"Where is this young gallant?" Poor Charles is as much slandered here by the painter as Orlando was by his brother. Well, but what of Orlando himself? He folds his hands, and turns up his eyes like a lover in his last appeal to his lady's mercy. What was the actual fact? Orlando had been but that instant called before the princesses; he had never seen them before in his life. He is a man of firm,

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calm, and gloomy character—the sadness having been induced by injustice; he has no hope, no thought of Rosalind or her love, at this moment; he has challenged the wrestler in quiet resolve to try with him the strength of his youth—little caring what comes of it. He answers the princesses with deep and grateful courtesy, but with a despairing carelessness of his fate—"If I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing." Imagine the calmness and steady melancholy of the man who would speak thus, and then compare the sentimental grimace (as of a fashionable tenor in a favourite aria) of the Orlando in the picture.

Next to pass from imagination of character to realization of detail. Mr. Maclise is supposed to draw well and realize minute features accurately. Now, the fact is, that this work has every fault usually attributed to the Pre-Raphaelites, without one of their excellences. The details are all so sharp and hard that the patterns on the dresses force the eye away from the faces, and the leaves on the boughs call to us to count them. But not only are they all drawn distinctly, they are all drawn *wrong*.

Take a single instance in a simple thing. On the part of the hem of the Duke's robe which crosses his right leg are seven circular golden ornaments, and two halves, Mr. Maclise being evidently unable to draw them as *turning* away *round* the side of the dress. Now observe, wherever there is a depression or fold in the dress, those circles ought to contract into narrow upright ovals. There *is* such a depression at the first next the half one on the left, and that circle ought to have become narrowed. Instead of which it actually widens itself! The second is right. Then the third, reaching the turn to the shade, and all those beyond it, ought to have been in narrowed perspective—but they all remain full circles! And so throughout the ornament. Imagine the errors which a draughtsman who

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could make such a childish mistake as this must commit in matters that really need refined drawing, turns of leaves, and so on!

But to pass from drawing to light and shade. Observe, the light falls from the left, on all the figures but that of the two on the extreme left. These two, for the sake of effect, are in "accidental shadow."[1] Good; but why then has Oliver, in the brown, a sharp light on the left side of his nose! and on his brown mantle? Reflected lights, says the apologist. From what? Not from the red Charles, who is five paces at least in advance of Oliver; and if from the golden dress of the courtier, how comes it that the nearer and brighter golden dress of the Duke casts *no reflected light* whatever on the yellow furs and red hose of the wrestler, infinitely more susceptible of such a reflex than the dress of Oliver?

It would be perfectly easy to analyze the whole picture in this manner; but I pass to a pleasanter subject of examination.

90. An Armenian Lady: Cairo. (*J. F. Lewis.*[2])

It is very instructive to pass immediately from Maclise's work to this. Both propose the complete rendering of details: but with Maclise all is inherently wrong; here everything is exquisitely, ineffably right. I say *ineffably*—for no words are strong enough to express the admirable skill and tenderness of pencilling and perception shown in this picture. It is one of the first that I have seen by this master in oil, and I am rejoiced to find it quite equal in precision and purity to his best work in water-colour, while it is in a safer medium. The delicacy of the drawing of the palm in the distance, of the undulating perspective of

[1] [The technical term for effects caused otherwise than by ordinary daylight: see Fairholt's *Dictionary of Terms in Art.*]

[2] [John Frederick Lewis (1805–1876) was elected A.R.A. in 1859 and R.A. in 1865. Two characteristic pictures by him are in the Tate Gallery, Nos. 1405 and 1688; and two drawings are reproduced in Vol. XII. pp. 362, 364. For other references to him see those passages, and the note at Vol. III. p. 120. See also below, pp. 52, 73, 94, 130, 159, 218.]

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the zigzags on the dress, and of the deep and fanciful local colouring of the vase, are all equally admirable. The face —infinitely laboured—fails slightly. The flesh tint is too blue—a fault into which the master has lately fallen from trying to reach impossible delicacy.

It is only to be regretted that this costly labour should be spent on a subject devoid of interest.

### 94. The River's Bank. (*T. Creswick, R.A.*[1])

This, like most other of the landscapes hung on the line, is one of those works so characteristic of the English school, and so little creditable to them, in which everything is carelessly or ill painted—because it is in a landscape. Nothing is really *done*. The cows have imperfect horns and hides; the girl has an imperfect face and imperfect hands; the trees have imperfect leaves; the sky imperfect clouds; the water imperfect waves. The colour, of a heavy yellow with dim green, is worse than imperfect; for colour must either be right—that is, infinitely beautiful; or wrong —that is, *less* than beautiful. All tame and dead colour is *false* colour.

### 120. Beatrice. (*C. L. Eastlake, P.R.A.*[2])

An imitation of the Venetians, on the supposition that the essence of Venetian painting consisted in method:

[1] [Thomas Creswick (1811–1869) was elected A.R.A. in 1842 and R.A. in 1851. At a period earlier than the present criticism, Ruskin instanced Creswick as a typical "modern painter" not of the first class, in the faithfulness of his study from nature, in contrast to the conventional untruthfulness in old masters such as Poussin. Creswick's is "the work of a man who has sought earnestly for truth: and who, with one thought or memory of nature in his heart, could look at the two landscapes, and receive Poussin's with ordinary patience? . . . Creswick has sweet feeling, and tries for the real green too, but, from want of science in his shadows, ends in green paint instead of green light" (*Modern Painters*, vol. i., Vol. III. pp. 591–592, 604). Pictures by Creswick may be seen at the Tate Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum.]

[2] [Sir Charles Lock Eastlake (1793–1865) was elected A.R.A. in 1827, R.A. in 1830, and P.R.A. in 1850. He was Keeper of the National Gallery from 1843 to 1847, and Director from 1855 till his death. Ruskin reviewed his "Materials for a History of Oil Painting" (1848) in the *Quarterly* (see Vol. XII. pp. 251–302, and see also Vol. III. p. 670. Pictures by Eastlake may be seen at the Tate Gallery and the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

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issuing, as trusts in Method instead of Fact always must issue—in mere negation. Sir Charles Eastlake has power of rendering expression, if he would watch it in human beings—and power of drawing form, if he would look at the form to be drawn. But when, because Giorgione and Titian draw broadly, and sometimes make their colours look broken, he supposes that all he has to do is to get a broken breadth, he ends, as all imitators must end, in a rich inheritance of the errors of his original, without its virtues. Titian and Giorgione have a slight tendency to flatness; but Giorgione's G Flat has accompaniments, Sir Charles's C Flat stands alone.

The real source of the error may be sufficiently seen in the distance; Titian paints his distances in pure colour—but at least indicates what is grass and what is stone. The distant ground, here, with its white spot for a castle, is a mere space of dim brownish-green paint, which can by no possibility stand for grass, or moss, or any other natural thing. It seems to me, however, that there are some points in the execution of the picture, considered as an example of certain textures, which are instructive. The whole is careful, and the draperies well cast. But who is the lady? Dante's Beatrice, or Benedict's? She can hardly be either: her face indicates little piety, and less wit.

121. FLITTING SHADOWS. (*H. Jutsum.*[1])

Not particularly remarkable, but good as an instance of tolerably clear and firm drawing. The clouds and ferns are both exceedingly well articulated.

186. "COME, REST IN THIS BOSOM," ETC. (*A. Egg, A.*[2])

Mr. Egg has considerable power of expression, and though this subject of prison sentiment is both painful, useless, and hackneyed, he appears to have something like

[1] [Henry Jutsum (1816–1869), a pupil of James Stark, first exhibited at the Academy, 1836; member of the New Water-Colour Society, 1843.]

[2] [Augustus Egg (1816–1863) was elected A.R.A. in 1848 and R.A. in 1860. He is represented in the Tate Gallery by two pictures, Nos. 444 and 1385. "He was,"

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serious purpose in his work. But he will never be a great painter until he has a greater respect for plain truth. There is in this picture one of the most wonderful fallacies that ever painter ventured. Observe the shadows of the bars of the window. They fall with intense sharpness on the wall at the back of the bed. Now, to get there, the sun must have come *in* at the window; it did not get through the keyhole. And as it came in at the window, it must have cast the first portions of those shadows *from the ends of the bars themselves.* But, actually, at the bars there are no shadows at all! It is dim daylight, shadowless, at the window itself. Hot sunshine, ten feet within the prison! The state of mind in which a painter could firmly carry out such a fallacy is wholly adverse to all real progress.

It is better to walk at once into the next room, in order to examine the more important work by this artist, "The Life and Death of Buckingham," No. 849. The story is worth telling, and there is vigorous painting in both pictures; but the figures which surround Buckingham in his riot are not of the class which could have entertained a man either of wit or breeding. Vice, unhappily, is not always repulsive at first sight, and the Tempter has not usually his bargain quite so cheap as he would have had of the Duke on such terms. The head of the dying Buckingham is forcible, but quite unfinished.

141. THE MITHERLESS BAIRN. (*T. Faed.*[1])

The story is well told, and the figure of the orphan child very affecting. But the painting is throughout the most commonplace Wilkieism—white spots everywhere. I expected far higher things from this painter, whose work eight years ago was more modest and powerful than it is now.

says Holman Hunt (to whom in his early days Egg gave encouragement and assistance), "a pictorial dramatist of true power; a keen reader and renderer of human expression to the very realm of poetic inspiration, if not of imaginative interpretation."—*Contemporary Review,* April 1886.]

[1] [Thomas Faed (1826–1900) was elected A.R.A. in 1859, and R.A. in 1864. Characteristic examples of his art are in the Tate Gallery, Nos. 1525–1527.]

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142. Dutch Boats: Zuider Zee. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*[1])

A fair example of Stanfield; but I never understand, in the accepted types of marine painting, why there is no distinction between the Foam and the Water. In the sea there is either yeasty foam or smooth surface; but in all marine paintings the waves are merely touched upon with little oblong strokes of white, which express neither water nor spray. Observe those in this picture at the boat's bow.

149. Lear Recovering his Reason at the Sight of Cordelia. (*J. R. Herbert, R.A.*[2])

As No. 78 [p. 9] furnished us with an instance of the class of picture which is Actively bad, we have here an equally important instance of the Passively bad; which, had it been in a less prominent place, might kindly have been passed without notice; but, since it is thus recommended to the public by its position, it must needs be examined.

In the whole compass of Shakespeare's conceptions, the two women whom he has gifted with the deepest souls are Cordelia and Virgilia.[3] All his other women can speak what is in them. These two cannot. The "Nothing, my lord," of Cordelia, and the "gracious silence" of Virgilia, are the everlasting seals set by the Master of the human heart upon the most sacred writing of its folded and golden leaves.

[1] [William Clarkson Stanfield (1793–1867) was elected A.R.A. in 1832 and R.A. in 1835. Ruskin always ranked him among the best marine painters of England: see Vol. III. pp. 226, 534, Vol. XIII. p. 31, and for other references, General Index. Stanfield's work may be studied in several examples at the Tate Gallery and Victoria and Albert Museum.]

[2] [John Rogers Herbert (1810–1890), who did some damage to his reputation in the later years of his life by exhibiting works of singular weakness, was elected A.R.A. in 1841 and R.A. in 1846. For the decoration of the Houses of Parliament he was commissioned to paint, in fresco, "King Lear disinheriting Cordelia" (now hopelessly decayed) in the Upper Waiting Hall, and also nine subjects illustrative of Human Justice for the Peers' Robing Room. Of these the "Moses" is generally considered the best, and it is also the best preserved. A picture by Herbert, "Sir Thomas More and his Daughter" (1844), is in the National collection, now lent to Chester.]

[3] [Compare *Sesame and Lilies*, § 56. For Cordelia's "Nothing, my lord," see *King Lear*, i. 1; and for Virgilia's "gracious silence," *Coriolanus*, ii. 1; the latter passage is cited, and commented upon, in *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 227), and in *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, § 65.]

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Shakespeare himself could not find words to tell what was in these women. And now, cast down at her father's feet, the alabaster vase is broken—the house of life is filled with the odour of the ointment—all Cordelia is poured forth in that infinite "I am" of fulfilled love.* Do but think of it for one quiet instant. Think of the rejected creature, so long disallowed from daughter's word and act; unsistered also—all her sisterhood changed into pale flame of indignation—now at last, in consummation of all sorrow, and pity, and shame, and thankfulness, and horror, and hope long delayed, watching the veil grow thin that in those eyes, wasted with grief, was still drawn between her father's soul and hers. Think of it! As for imagining it—perhaps Dante might have imagined it, with the winds of paradise yet upon his brow. As for painting it——

And yet, in the midst of the Royal Academy Rooms of England, and in the midst of the nineteenth century, that profile of firwood, painted buff, with a white spot in the corner of the eye, does verily profess to be a painting of it.

It is a thing not a little to be pondered upon, that the men who attempt these highest things are always those who cannot even do the least things well. Around the brow of this firwood figure there is a coronet, and in the coronet four jewels. I thought that, according to Royal Academy principles, in a "High Art" picture,[1] this Rundell and Bridge[2] portion of it should have been a little less

* "I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.
*Cordelia.* And so I am; *I am.*"
(Act iv. sc. 7.)

[1] [For this phrase, see Vol. V. p. 19 *n.*]

[2] [Rundell and Bridge, long established on Ludgate Hill, were the great silversmiths and jewellers of the time of George III. and George IV., and later. See Hood's "Miss Kilmansegg":—

"The golden knives, and the golden spoons,
The gems that sparkled like fairy boons,
It was one of the Kilmansegg's own saloons
But look'd like Rundell and Bridge's!"

See also *Lothair* (ch. xxxiii.): "Flaxman worked for Rundell and Bridge in the old days, one of the principal causes of their success. Your Lordship's gold service was supplied by Rundell and Bridge." Another designer employed by the firm was Pugin (see Eastlake's *History of the Gothic Revival*, p. 147).]



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conspicuous. However, as we find these unideal emeralds and rubies thus condescendingly touched, let us see *how* they are touched. Each stone has a white spot, or high light, upon it. Now, that flash is always the reflection of the highest light to which the jewel is turned; and here, in a tent, it must be of an opening in the tent on the left-hand side. Now, as the jewels are set round the brow, each in a different position, each would reflect this tent door from a different spot of its surface. This change in the position of the reflection would be one of the principal means by which Nature would indicate the curve of the coronet. Now, look at the painting. Every gem has actually the high light in the same spot, on the left-hand side, all round the brow!

The dimness of pictorial capacity indicated by such a blunder as this is very marvellous. For a painter of the slightest power, even though he had not drawn the gems from Nature, would infallibly have varied the flash, for his own pleasure, and in an instinctive fulfilment of the eternal law of change.

It is nevertheless a fact that, although from some peculiar idiosyncrasy not comprehending the passage in *King Lear*, Mr. Herbert has feeling; and if he would limit his work to subjects of the more symbolic and quietly religious class, which truly move him, and would consider himself by no means a great master, but a very incipient student, and paint everything from the fact and life faithfully, he would be able to produce works of some value.

159. Sir Robert Harry Inglis.[1] (*G. Richmond.*[2])

A very interesting portrait of a good man by a good painter. The attitude, as characteristic of Sir Robert, is admirably chosen; but the face, though it has all the

[1] [Inglis (1786–1855) was for many years M.P. for the University of Oxford. He took a prominent part in the political controversies of the time as a Tory and strong Churchman, and was exceedingly popular in the House of Commons. He was also Antiquary of the Royal Academy. Ruskin was acquainted with him; see Vol. III. p. xliv. *n.* Richmond's portrait was painted for the Bodleian Library at Oxford.]

[2] [George Richmond (1809–1896) was elected A.R.A. in 1857 and R.A. in 1866. Several of Richmond's portraits may be seen in the National Portrait Gallery:

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gentleness, has hardly the vivacity, of Sir Robert's look of welcome. The chief fault of this portrait is the mistiness of the accessories on the right hand. I am sorry to see Mr. Richmond countenancing the false, though of late Parliamentary, persuasion, that every statesman's proper element is Fog; and it was a poor compliment, both to Sir Robert Inglis and to himself, to suppose that the portrait would not be sufficiently interesting, unless he subdued the collateral interest of the joint-stool.

161. ROYAL PRISONERS: 1650. (*C. W. Cope, R.A.*[1])

A very beautiful and well-chosen subject,[2] not ill painted. The spectator will see it to better advantage, if with his hand he will hide the guard's helmet, which projects into the light like the beak of a canoe, and appears, for a moment, to be the principal subject.

181. CHRISTABEL. (*W. Dyce, R.A.*[3])

An example of one of the false branches of Pre-Raphaelitism, consisting in imitation of the old religious masters. This head is founded chiefly on reminiscence of Sandro Botticelli. The ivy leaves at the side are as elaborate as in the true school, but are quite false both in colour and shade. There is some sweet expression in the face.

some in oils, others in chalks. Ruskin preferred Richmond's work in the latter vehicle :—

> "I am very sorry," he wrote to his father (Turin, August 11, 1858), "he feels, or felt, the unsuccessful oil campaign so much; because the whole failure resulted from easily avoidable mistakes. He may paint superb portraits in oil yet, if he will only accept the Awful laws of oil, and act on the knowledge, which I am sure he possesses. He was hoping that the Fates which rule colour would have been gentle with him, because he has such sweet and right feeling; but the Fates have limbs of iron and hearts of fire and cannot be soothed nor blended."

In the Tate Gallery is a Raphaelesque picture by Richmond, painted when he was eighteen (No. 1492). In 1840 Richmond was in Rome, where he made the acquaintance of the Ruskins: see *Præterita*, ii. ch. ii. For Richmond's water-colour portrait of Ruskin, full-length figure, see the frontispiece to Vol. III.]

[1] [Charles West Cope (1811–1890), historical painter, was elected A.R.A. in 1843 and R.A. in 1848. He executed some of the frescoes for the Houses of Parliament, but these are now in a very bad condition. Of his smaller works there are good specimens in the Victoria and Albert Museum.]

[2] [Princess Elizabeth lying dead, and her brother, Prince Henry, at Carisbrook Castle.]

[3] [William Dyce (1806–1864) was elected A.R.A. in 1844 and R.A. in 1848. For a more favourable criticism in a later year, see p. 98. Dyce is represented in the

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199. A CHURCH DOOR. (*J. D. Luard.*[1])

A faithful little study, very refreshing among the artificialnesses with which it is surrounded.

201. PENSEROSA. (*C. W. Cope, R.A.*)

The young lady appears to be reading, may possibly be thinking, is certainly passing under a Norman arch, and is very pretty. This *ensemble* is interesting, but had better have been put into the architectural room, as it may materially promote the erection of Norman arches in the gardens of the metropolis, for the better performance of pensive appearances to morning visitors.

228. IN BETCHWORTH PARK. (*W. F. Witherington, R.A.*[2])

240. THE BIRD KEEPER. (*R. Redgrave, R.A.*[3])

We have here two interesting examples of another fallacious condition of landscape — that which pretends to Pre-Raphaelite distinctness of detail; but is in all detail industriously wrong.[4] In Creswick's work the touches represent nothing; here they represent perpetual error, assuming that all leaves of trees may be represented by oval, sharp-pointed touches of yellow or green—as if leaves had not their perspectives, shadows, and changes of hue like everything else! There is great appearance of fidelity to nature in these works, but there is none in reality; they are mere mechanical accumulations of similar touches, as a sempstress mechanically accumulates similar stitches. If the

Tate Gallery by two characteristic pictures, Nos. 1407, 1426. He was instrumental in calling Ruskin's attention to the work of the Pre-Raphaelites: see Vol. XII. p. xlv.]

[1] [John Dalbiac Luard (1830–1860) originally held a commission in the army, which he left to become a pupil of John Phillip.]

[2] [William Frederick Witherington (1785–1865) became A.R.A. in 1830 and R.A. in 1840. His earlier pictures were landscapes.]

[3] [Richard Redgrave, C.B. (1804–1888), exhibited at the Academy from 1825 onwards, first genre pictures, afterwards landscapes; R.A., 1851. From 1847 to 1875 Redgrave filled official positions in the Art Department, and from 1857 to 1880 was Surveyor of Crown Pictures. For a reference to Redgrave's "delicate domesticity," see Vol. III. p. 675. In *Richard Redgrave: a Memoir compiled from his Diary* (1891), a few reminiscences of Ruskin may be found.]

[4] [For the references here, see above, pp. 11, 13.]

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spectator desires to know the difference between right and wrong in this matter, let him first examine Mr. Witherington's oval touches, and then cross the room to No. 821 [p. 24], in which the flowers in the window are truly and properly painted, and look at the way the leaves are set and worked there; and if it be supposed that this is only to be done in a cabinet picture, the question is well worth settling at once by merely walking out of the Academy into the National Gallery next door,[1] and looking at the leaves which crown the Bacchus, and the little dancing faun, in Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne" [No. 35], in which every turn of the most subtle perspective, and every gradation of colour, is given with the colossal ease and power of the consummate master. Examine, further, the vine-leaves above on the right, and the flowers in the foreground, and you will return to the Academy with an eye so instructed, as hardly thenceforward to accept, in such matters, fallacies for facts.

239. THE BROKEN WINDOW: WHO THREW THE STONE? (*W. H. Knight.*[2])

This picture does not catch the eye at a distance, but, on looking close, there will be found exquisite and careful painting in it. The fish on the tray on the boy's head are amongst the best bits of cabinet painting in the room.

244. "THE MOORLAND": TENNYSON.[3] (*J. W. Inchbold.*[4])

This is, as far as I have seen, the only thoroughly good landscape in the rooms of the Academy. It is more

[1] [The Royal Academy was at this time housed in the same building with the National Gallery. Over one of the entrance doors to the Gallery in Trafalgar Square the words "Royal Academy of Arts" may still be seen. For other references to "Bacchus and Ariadne," see below, p. 302, and Vol. III. p. 268 *n.*]

[2] [William Henry Knight (1823–1863); first exhibited at the Academy 1846. "The Broken Window," the picture noticed above, was engraved in the *Art Journal*, Aug. 1865.]

[3] ["O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!"—*Locksley Hall.*]

[4] [John William Inchbold (1830–1888) was one of the painters who carried the principles of Pre-Raphaelitism into the field of landscape. A picture of his in an earlier exhibition had attracted Ruskin's attention (see p. 38, below); he sought out

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exquisite in its finish of lichenous rock painting than any work I have ever seen. Its colour, throughout, is as forcible as it is subtle and refined; and although it appears as yet to display little power of invention, the appreciation of truth in it is so intense, that a single inch of it is well worth all the rest of the landscapes in the room. It may well be supposed that my knowledge of this picture was not obtained by study of it in its present position. Those who happen to be interested in the system of hanging now pursued in the Academy, will do well to verify my statement by an examination of the picture after the exhibition closes.

There are two other works by this artist, in the outer rooms: 1075, ineffective, but yet full of excellent work and right feeling; and 1162, exceedingly beautiful.[1]

282. THE RESCUE. (*J. E. Millais, A.*[2])

It is the only *great* picture exhibited this year; but this is *very* great. The immortal element is in it to the full.

the young painter, gave him advice and encouragement, and introduced him to the work of Rossetti (see *Ruskin, Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelitism*, pp. 79, 96). Inchbold also made the acquaintance of Mr. Swinburne, who has published a memorial poem upon him. Coventry Patmore was another admirer; see his *Life* by B. Champneys, ii. 169. There is a picture by Inchbold in the Tate Gallery, No. 1477, which also is a moorland scene. In 1856 Inchbold was in Switzerland, and Ruskin saw something of him there.]

[1] [1075, "At Bolton"; 1162, "A Study: in March."]

[2] [The career of Millais (1829–1896) is too well known to need any notice here. His early friendship with Ruskin and Ruskin's appreciation of his work have already been noticed in Vol. XII. pp. xviii.–xlix. The critic's enthusiasm continued through 1855, the year of the present *Notes*, and 1856 (see p. 56 below.) It was not until 1857, long after their intimacy had ceased, that Ruskin noted a change in the painter's work: "it is not merely Fall, it is Catastrophe" (p. 107). In 1859 he continued to sound a note of warning, but also extolled the painter's powers (p. 214). Millais's criticism of his critic at this period is interesting: "Ruskin will be disgusted this year, for all the rubbish he has been praising before being sent into the Royal Academy has now bad places. There is a wretched work like a photograph of some place in Switzerland, evidently painted under his guidance, for he seems to have lauded it up sky-high; and that is *just where it is* in the miniature room! He does not understand my work, which is now too broad for him to appreciate, and I think his eye is only fit to judge the portraits of insects" (*Life and Letters of Millais*, i. 342). The "wretched work like a photograph," was Brett's "Val d'Aosta" (see below, p. 234). In the *Notes* of 1875, Ruskin returned to the charge against what he considered Millais's lapse from the ideals and methods of his youth (p. 302). His later criticisms, including emphatic tributes to the master's genius and appreciation even of his "free-hand painting," are collected lower down (see pp. 495, 496).]

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It is easily understood, and the public very generally understand it. Various small cavils have been made at it, chiefly by conventionalists, who never ask how the thing is, but fancy for themselves how it ought to be. I have heard it said, for instance, that the fireman's arm should not have looked so black in the red light. If people would only try the experiment, they would find that near black, compared with other colours, is always black. Coals do not look red in a fire, but where they are red hot. In fact, the contrast between any dark colour and a light one, is always nearly the same, however high we raise the light that falls on both.[1] Paul Veronese often paints local colour darker in the lights than in the shadow, generally equal in both. The glow that is mixed with the blackness is here intensely strong; but, justly, does not destroy the nature of the blackness.

The execution of the picture is remarkably bold — in some respects imperfect. I have heard it was hastily finished; but, except in the face of the child kissing the mother, it could not be much bettered. For there is a true sympathy between the impetuousness of execution and the haste of the action.[2]

305. AT THE OPERA. (*W. P. Frith, R.A.*[3])

There is great cleverness and successful realization, up to a certain point, in this picture, the work being very thoroughly done, as far as the painter sees what *is* to be

[1] [See further on this point, pp. 35–37, below.]

[2] [The origin of this picture and the circumstances in which it was painted are fully described in *The Life and Letters of Millais*, vol. i. pp. 247–257. Millais had taken great pains with the preliminary studies, but was behind-hand with the picture itself. "On the last day but one he began to work as soon as it was daylight, and worked on all through the night and following day until the van arrived for the picture. His friend Charles Collins sat up with him and painted the fire-hose, whilst Millais worked at other parts; and in the end a large piece of sheet-iron was placed on the floor, upon which a flaming brand was put and worked from amidst suffocating smoke." The picture is now in the collection of Mr. Holbrook Gaskell.]

[3] [William Powell Frith (*b.* 1819) began to exhibit at the Academy in 1840; was elected A.R.A. in 1844; and in 1852, R.A. His early pictures were of subjects from English literature. In 1854 he made his first great success, in subjects of modern life, with "Ramsgate Sands." For other references to Mr. Frith, see pp. 53, 161, 279, and *Ariadne Florentina*, § 140.]

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done, and all very skilfully handled, down to the utmost seam of the white kid gloves. It is not a kind of painting which will ever bring great fame, or deserve it; but it is better than spurious "High Art."

321. THE WRITING LESSON. (*J. Collinson.*[1])

This is a very careful and beautiful study—the subject not interesting enough to render the picture attractive; but it is a good piece of work throughout, and there are not many pictures in the room of which this can be said.

355. A CONTRAST.[2] (*A. Solomon.*[3])

It is difficult to see this picture at the height at which it is placed, but it seems to me better than most of its class in the rooms; and the face of the invalid is very beautiful.

357. SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIANS: THE SERMON. (*J. Stirling.*)

A very noticeable picture, showing careful study and good discrimination of expression. But the painter cannot yet do all he wants to do; he should try to work more delicately, and not attempt so much at once.

[1] [James Collinson (*d.* 1881) was one of the seven original members of "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" (see Vol. XII. p. xliii.) Of his minute methods of workmanship some account is given in W. M. Rossetti's *Præ-Raphaelite Diaries and Letters*, p. 223. To the *Germ* he contributed a mystical poem, entitled "The Child Jesus." In 1851 appeared his principal work, "An Incident in the Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary," in illustration of Kingsley's *Saint's Tragedy*. On becoming a convert to Roman Catholicism, Collinson resigned his membership in the brotherhood. His letter of resignation is printed in *Præ-Raphaelite Diaries*, p. 275. He spent the years 1852–1854 in a convent, but in 1855 resumed exhibiting at the Academy. Some interesting reminiscences of Collinson are given in Holman Hunt's papers on the brotherhood (*Contemporary Review*, May 1886).]

[2] [In the catalogue were the illustrative lines (from the *Second Part of Henry IV.*, iv. 4):—

"Will Fortune never come with both hands full?
Such are the poor in health; such are the rich,
That have abundance and enjoy it not."]

[3] [Abraham Solomon (1824–1862), whose work was thus praised by Ruskin, established his reputation two years later with "Waiting for the Verdict" (see p. 327).]

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471. Fowl and Pigeons. (*W. Huggins.*[1])

There is excellent painting in pieces of this study; but as a whole it is incomplete, the background being wrong, and the parts out of harmony. The painter ought to work with the sternest self-denial, from corner to corner of his picture, completing everything from nature, near or distant, to the best of his power.

486. The Mother of Moses. (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

I alluded to this picture in noticing the landscape works by the same artist [p. 9]. This is very truly and thoughtfully conceived. It is interesting to consider how many "findings of Moses" have been painted, not one of which ever attempted to express this, the deepest note of passion in all the scene.[2] The princess and her maidens pleasantly surprised at finding a child among the reeds! this was all that the so-called great masters ever dreamed of. The modern painter is to be deeply thanked for his true and earnest thought; above all for the little Miriam, trotting by her mother's side with her rough harp, and pitcher hung by it, looking back, in her childish wisdom and fear, to see that the princess is not watching the burst of passion which might betray her mother.

545. St. Sebastian: During the Siege, July 1813. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

A careful and good example of Stanfield's work. But persons who accuse the Pre-Raphaelites of faults in aerial perspective,[3] may perhaps be able to account, better than I can, for the fact that the foreground and the hill three miles off are precisely of the same colour.

[1] [William Huggins (1820–1884) was known in his native city as "the Liverpool Landseer."]

[2] [The full title of the picture was "The Gratitude of the Mother of Moses for the Safety of her Child." For Bible subjects "waiting to be painted," see Vol. V. p. 87.]

[3] [See Vol. XI. p. 59.]

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569. CIMABUE'S MADONNA CARRIED IN PROCESSION THROUGH THE STREETS OF FLORENCE. (*F. Leighton.*[1])

This is a very important and very beautiful picture. It has both sincerity and grace, and is painted on the purest principles of Venetian art—that is to say, on the calm acceptance of the whole of nature, small and great, as, in its place, deserving of faithful rendering. The great secret of the Venetians was their simplicity. They were great colourists, not because they had peculiar secrets about oil and colour, but because, when they saw a thing red, they painted it red; and when they saw it blue, they painted it blue; and when they saw it distinctly, they painted it distinctly. In all Paul Veronese's pictures, the lace borders of the table-cloths or fringes of the dresses are painted with just as much care as the faces of the principal figures; and the reader may rest assured that in all great art it is so. Everything in it is done as well as it *can* be done. Thus, in the picture before us, in the background is the Church of San Miniato, strictly accurate in every detail; on the top of the wall are oleanders and pinks, as carefully painted as the church; the architecture of the shrine on the wall is well studied from thirteenth-century Gothic, and painted with as much care as the pinks; the dresses of the figures, very beautifully designed, are painted with as much care as the architecture; and the faces with as much care as the dresses—that is to say, all things, throughout, with as much care as the painter could bestow. It necessarily follows, that what is most difficult (*i.e.*, the faces) should be comparatively the worst done. But if they are done as well as the painter could do them, it is all we have to ask;

[1] [Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830–1896), was at this time little known in art circles in London, for he studied and worked abroad. He had been introduced to Ruskin by Browning (see Vol. V. p. xlv.) It was not till 1864 that he was elected A.R.A.; he became R.A. in 1868, and President in 1879. The "Cimabue" was bought by Queen Victoria, and made Leighton famous: the picture now hangs in the visitors' corridor, private apartments, Buckingham Palace. Other contemporary criticisms by high authorities may be read in D. G. Rossetti's *Letters to William Allingham*, and in Madox Brown's Diary printed in W. M. Rossetti's *Præ-Raphaelite Diaries and Letters*, p. 183. For the subject of the picture, see Vol. III. p. 644 *n.*

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and modern artists are under a wonderful mistake in thinking that when they have painted faces ill, they make their picture more valuable by painting the dresses worse.

The painting before us has been objected to, because it seems broken up into bits. Precisely the same objection would hold, and in very nearly the same degree, against the best works of the Venetians. All faithful colourists' work, in figure-painting, has a look of sharp separation between part and part. I will not detain the reader by explaining *why* this is so, but he may convince himself of the fact by one walk through the Louvre, comparing the Venetian pictures in this respect with those of all other schools. Although, however, in common with all other works of its class, it is marked by these sharp divisions, there is no confusion in its arrangement. The principal figure is nobly principal, not by extraordinary light, but by its own pure whiteness; and both the master and the young Giotto attract full regard by distinction of form and face. The features of the boy are carefully studied, and are indeed what, from the existing portraits of him, we know those of Giotto must have been in his youth. The head of the young girl who wears the garland of blue flowers is also very sweetly conceived.

Such are the chief merits of the picture. Its defect is, that the equal care given to the whole of it, is not yet *care enough*. I am aware of no instance of a young painter, who was to be really great, who did not in his youth paint with intense effort and delicacy of finish. The handling here is much too broad; and the faces are, in many instances, out of drawing, and very opaque and feeble in colour. Nor have they, in general, the dignity of the countenance of the thirteenth century. The Dante especially is ill-conceived—far too haughty, and in no wise noble or thoughtful. It seems to me probable that Mr. Leighton has greatness in him, but there is no absolute proof of it in this picture; and if he does not, in succeeding years, paint far better, he will soon lose his power of painting so well.

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594. ROME. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*[1])

This is a large architectural diagram, with the outlines executed sharply in black, the upper half being then painted brick-red, and the lower green-grey. (Note the distinctness of the mannerism in the *outlined* statues and pillars of the chapel in shade upon the right.) I can hardly understand how any man, devoting his time to painting, ever comes to suppose that a picture can be right which is painted in two colours! or by what reasoning he persuades himself that, because seen under the red light of sunset, the purple trunk of a stone pine, the white stucco of house walls, the scarlet of tiles, and the green of foliage, may all be of the same colour![2] Imagine a painting of a beautiful blue-eyed female face, by sunset, which represented its blue eyes, its nose, its cheeks, and its lips, all of the same brick-red!

Mr. Roberts was once in the habit of painting carefully-finished cabinet pictures, which were well composed (in the common sense), and fairly executed in the details. Had he continued these, painting more and more, instead of less and less, from nature, he might by this time have been a serviceable painter. Is it altogether too late to warn him that he is fast becoming nothing more than an Academician?

686. TROUT STREAM IN WALES. (*J. Dearle.*)

Mr. Dearle's painting, considered as mere laying of colour, is perhaps better than that of any of the landscapists whose works are low enough to be visible, but his drawing of foliage is mannered and false. These trees are far more like moss than trees. He appears also to be confining himself

[1] [For David Roberts (1796–1864) see Vol. III. p. 223 *n.* Later on in these *Notes* (p. 35) Ruskin refers to his personal regard for the painter. In the *Notes* of 1859 he again contrasts Roberts's later work unfavourably with his earlier (p. 221). In the Tate Gallery, Roberts is represented by pictures painted in 1835 and 1848 respectively (Nos. 400, 401). In the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum there are several examples of his work both in oil and water-colour.]

[2] [See further on this point, p. 34, below.]

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to one kind of scene—an indolent habit, which can end in nothing but mediocrity. His river scene last year was good,[1] for once; a duplicate of it is too much.

1334. THE GOOD HARVEST OF 1854. (*C. A. Collins.*[2])

There is much careful painting in this little study, and it was a wicked thing to put it into a room in which, while its modest subject could draw no attention, its good painting was of necessity utterly invisible.

1359. DRESSING FOR THE FIRST PARTY. (*A. C. Chisholme.*)

A very spirited picture, the best in execution (of its school) in the rooms.

1405. THE "LONDON GAZETTE," 1854. (*F. B. Barwell.*)

The Academy is, of course, filled with pictures of this kind of subject. This is, I think, the most earnest. It seems to be the only one which takes grief out of the drawing-room, and conceives it as independent of miniatures by Sir William Ross.[3]

There are several other pictures in the rooms respecting which I should have been glad to say a few words; but I

[1] [The river scene of 1854 was "Evening, on the Marchno, North Wales." Ruskin had praised it in his letter to the *Times* on the Pre-Raphaelites: see Vol. XII. p. 332.]

[2] [Charles Allston Collins (1828–1873), brother of Wilkie Collins, painted for some time in the style of the Pre-Raphaelites, exhibiting at the Academy from 1848–1855. In the latter year he gave up painting and devoted himself to literature, contributing to *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, then under the editorship of Charles Dickens, one of whose daughters he married. The picture noticed above is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, having been acquired under the Townshend bequest in 1869. Collins was a great friend of Millais, of whom he did a pencil drawing in 1850, now in the University Galleries at Oxford. He assisted Millais to finish the "Rescue," *ante*, p. 22, and stood as his model for the "Huguenot" and the "Black Brunswicker." For Ruskin's earlier notice of Collins' work, see Vol. XII. p. 320.]

[3] [Sir William Ross, R.A. (1794–1860), was at this time the fashionable miniature painter: for another mention of him see Vol. XII. p. 322.]

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have no time to pursue the subject further, and must here leave the reader to his own investigations, only expressing my regret that absence from London prevents, for the present, my seeing a picture, of which a friend, in whose judgment I have great confidence, speaks with unusual enthusiasm—No. 514, "Early Spring Evening" (W. Davis).[1] My friend says it contains the "unity of perfect truth with invention." I cannot answer for its doing this, which would place it in the first rank of works of art; but, as it is hung in a place where it is not easily caught sight of, I have little doubt it must be a work of merit.[2]

---

Some surprise has been expressed to me by friends at the small number of pictures marked in the preceding Notes, as if, in passing by the others, I had intended to convey an impression of their being beneath criticism. I do not think that of all the pictures on the walls there are more than six or seven beneath criticism; but I do think that those which above are mentioned with praise are, on the whole, the best in the rooms, and that those which are blamed are fair examples of the worst: one or two omissions, made accidentally, in a somewhat hurried review, it is better, perhaps, thus late, than in nowise, to repair.

Of these the only one I seriously regretted was of the "Elgiva," by Miss J. M. Boyce[3] (No. 1295). The expression

[1] [See below, p. 32.]

[2] [Here the first and second editions of the pamphlet ended.]

[3] [This was the first exhibited work of Miss Joanna Mary Boyce (1831–1861), sister of G. P. Boyce, the painter (see note on p. 162). Two years later she married Mr. H. T. Wells, R.A. She continued to exhibit, but the high hopes which her talent inspired were cut off by early death. Several of her works were included in the Winter Exhibition in the Academy in 1901. She was a friend of Rossetti, who took a portrait of her as she lay in death (*Letters and Memoirs of D. G. Rossetti*, i. 212; *Life and Writings of Anne Gilchrist*, p. 94). Ruskin had a great regard for her, as is shown by the following passage from a letter to his father:—

> "Boulogne, *July* 19 [1861].—Mrs. Wells's death is nearly as great a trouble (*more* of a shock to me) than Mrs. Browning's—she was nearly a perfect creature in intellect and purpose, her work just beginning. You may remember her beautiful head of Elgiva in the Academy."

Elgiva, the queen of Edwy (from whom she is said to have been separated by the machinations of the Church), was in favour with painters at this time. Her sad story was the subject of a picture by Millais in 1847.]

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in this head is so subtle, and so tenderly wrought, that at first the picture might easily be passed as hard or cold; but it could only so be passed, as Elgiva herself might have been sometimes seen,—by a stranger—without penetration of her sorrow. As we watch the face for a little time, the slight arch of the lip seems to begin to quiver, and the eyes fill with ineffable sadness and on-look of despair. The dignity of all the treatment—the beautiful imagination of faint but pure colour, place this picture, to my mind, among those of the very highest power and promise. Complete achievement there is not in it as yet, chiefly because the colours, quite exquisitely conceived and arranged, are not each in their own separate quality perfect, in the sense in which any given colour by Bonifazio or Giorgione is perfect; but if this artist, looking always to Nature and her own thoughts for the thing to be expressed, will strive to express them, with some memory of the great Venetians in her treatment of each separate hue, it seems to me that she might entertain the hope of taking place in the very first rank of painters.

Two pictures I passed intentionally without remark, not because they were unimportant, but because they seemed to me to unite good and bad qualities in a manner so curiously entangled, that no short criticism could clearly separate the one from the other—I mean Mr. Dobson's "Almsdeeds of Dorcas" (379),[1] and Mr. Sant's "Eda" (688).[2] Of these the first has certainly some high qualities, but seems to me singularly wanting in pictorial delightfulness: it looks like the work of a man of good feeling and considerable industry, who had been forced to learn to paint against his will, and did it in many respects well, but without pleasure. The second, "Eda," shows, as do all Mr. Sant's works, very high pictorial power, more or

[1] [W. C. T. Dobson (1817–1898), after exhibiting little figure subjects for some years at the Academy, was elected A.R.A. in 1860 and R.A. in 1872. He also contributed to the water-colour exhibitions.]

[2] [James Sant (*b.* 1820) was elected R.A. in 1870, and was principal Painter-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria.]

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less lost in the cold conventionality of modern colour, or non-colour. Surely Mr. Sant must admire Reynolds! why does he not aim at Reynolds's pitch and character of hue? Very certainly he admires children,—does he really think that this pretty little lady's cheeks have as much of the peach and as little of the mortal clay in them as he sees in the sunned cheek of living childhood? There is much throughout this picture to be admired, but also much to be regretted; and I cannot, without too long detention of the reader, accurately mark the gradations of respect or regret.

In the work commended to me by my friend—Mr. Davis's "Spring Evening" (514)—I am disappointed. It is unfair to judge of it in its present position, but it appears to me merely good Pre-Raphaelite work, certainly showing no evidence whatever of inventive power, and perhaps less tact than usual in choice of subject; but it is assuredly superior to any of the landscapes hung on the line.[1]

[1] [William Davis (1812–1873) was Professor of Painting in the Liverpool Academy. Rossetti was the "friend." The following letter, together with a stamped envelope addressed to the artist, was found among Rossetti's papers; presumably Ruskin had first sent it to Rossetti, who, thinking that its contents would prove discouraging rather than otherwise to Davis, obtained the writer's consent not to send it on: see *Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelitism*, p. 169, from which book the letter is here reprinted. The pictures referred to in it are among those which Davis sent to "the Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition" of 1857:—

"My dear Sir,—I had much pleasure in examining the pictures of yours which Mr. Rossetti showed me this afternoon: they show an exquisite sense of colour, and much tender feeling of the expression of the scenes. Rossetti is himself so much delighted with them that I do not doubt their possessing qualities of peculiar interest to an artist, in the conquering of various technical difficulties. Your work, however, cannot become popular unless you choose subjects of greater interest: nor can I in the least direct you how to choose them—for there seems to me hardly a single point of communion or understanding between you and me as to the meaning of the word 'Subject.' It seems to *me* that you might have sought over most landscapes for miles together, and not stumbled over anything so *little* rewarding your pains and skill as that 'ditch and wheatfield.'

"Probably your modes of selection and habits of execution are now so determined that it would be mere impertinence in me to suggest others. I may however note one thing—namely, what seems to me your too great trust to the liquidity of the vehicle in blending your colours. Good use has been made of this quality by the masters of the Pre-Raphaelite school, but it is a dangerous temptation: the highest results

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There are also many promising and meritorious studies of landscape, such as Mr. Dearmer's "Magpie Island" (665), scattered about the rooms, in positions variously inconspicuous; but these I do not particularly name, as until a picture possesses some qualities of *colour* it is not, in the proper sense, a picture at all; and studies of simple green effects are to be considered merely as materials for future work of higher order. Many of these studies, however, would have won some admiration and sympathy for the young artists, if they had been placed where they could have been in any wise justly seen; and in reprobation of the treatment they have for the most part received, it would be well to remember—glancing once more at Mr. Leighton's picture of Giotto and Cimabue—those noble lines of Mrs. Browning, in *Casa Guidi Windows*, beginning—

> "I hold, too,
> That Cimabue smiled upon the lad
> At the first stroke which passed what *he* could do;
> Or else his Virgin's smile had never had
> Such sweetness in't."[1]

And now, in conclusion, I have only to notice and answer an attempted defence by one of the daily papers of some of the pictures blamed in the above Notes. It is not indeed my usual practice to read, still less to answer, the remarks of journalists on what I write. Their public duty compels them to criticise at an hour's notice what I have taken years to consider; and it cannot be a matter

in oil-painting depend on judicious and powerful use of dryer, in no wise *floating* colour.

"I liked the two dogs the best of all I saw—the couchant winking one is delicious; and there is more sense of real *form* in this than in the other pictures.

"If you by chance should come to London this season, I think we might come to some understanding in a chat, if you would give me the pleasure of seeing you.

"Truly yours,
"J. RUSKIN."]

[1] [For an earlier reference to the same "noble poem," see *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 243 *n.*); and compare *Political Economy of Art*, § 36 *n.*, § 78 *n.*, and *Val d'Arno*, § 99. See also below, p. 430.]



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of wonder that, under such circumstances, they should often misunderstand, and sometimes misrepresent me. The error and the distortion may in general be left to the correction of time; but as these *Notes* are intended expressly for the use of readers who have little time to spare, I will meet with as much reply as may be necessary every endeavour on the part of the journalists to invalidate their authority. Hitherto I have noticed but one effort of the kind—namely, that in the *Globe* of the 18th of June.

It is above said [p. 28] of Mr. Roberts's picture, that the reasoning must be strange which persuaded its artist "that, because seen under the red light of sunset, the purple trunk of a stone pine, and the white stucco of house walls, the scarlet of tiles, and the green of foliage, might all be of the same colour."

The *Globe* replies:—That in *Modern Painters* I said,—"Local colour, changeful and uncertain in itself, is again disguised and modified by the hue of the light."[1] I did so. I said much more than this. If the writer had searched a little further, he might have found the following passage, infinitely more to his purpose: "I have seen the pale fresh green of spring vegetation in the gardens of Venice turned pure russet, or between that and crimson, by a vivid sunset of this kind, every *particle of green colour being absolutely annihilated.*" I said this, and said it most truly; but I never said that the leaves were, under such circumstances, *of the same colour as the trunks*, or as the palace tiles, or as the house walls. The light which will turn green to brownish russet turns blue to purple, white to pale rose, scarlet to a burning flame-colour, far above all possible imitation, and brown to scarlet,—every colour retaining its due relation, in paleness or darkness, to every other; while all the shadows, down to the minutest angle of a stone, retaining the local colours unaltered by the light, and

[1] [The reference is to vol. i. pt. ii. sec. i. ch. v. § 8 (in this edition, Vol. III. p. 161). The passage next referred to by Ruskin is vol. i. pt. ii. sec. ii. ch. i. § 18 (Vol. III. p. 271).]

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doubly brought out by opposition, fill the intervals and interstices of the warm effect with the most marvellous pieces of the purest blue, green, or grey. A thousand different hues ought to have been seen in every inch of that glowing light, before it could have been right; and the notable misfortune of the picture is, that where there *is* the slightest variation, it is always on the wrong side. Thus, in the principal tower on the right, the tiles, which were naturally red, and ought now to have been of intensest vermilion, are actually, though a little darker, less *red* than the wall below; and the paler buildings (Castle of St. Angelo, etc.), beyond the river, are less affected by the red light than the sprays of the stone pine! while the reflection in the river—which the writer in the *Globe* instances as an introduction of a third colour—is the broadest fallacy in the whole work: it is brighter than the sky above it, instead of being, as a reflection always is, a little darker; and what makes the matter worse is that the river, seen from above in that position, could not have reflected the pale sky at the horizon at all, but only the dark sky some distance above.

I deeply regret having been forced to speak again of this picture, because (so much of private feeling it may be permitted me to confess) I have great personal regard for Mr. Roberts; but it may be well to state at once, that whenever I blame a painting, I do so as gently as is consistent with just explanation of its *principal* defects. I never say half of what I could say in its disfavour; and it will hereafter be found that when once I have felt it my duty to attack a picture, the worst policy which the friends of the artist can possibly adopt will be to defend it.

The next passage which the *Globe* endeavours to invalidate is that in which I said, respecting "The Rescue," —"The contrast between any dark colour and a light one is always nearly the same, however high we raise the light that falls on *both;*" against which the *Globe* quotes my

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statement in *Modern Painters*:[1] — "Light and shade so completely conquer the distinctions of local colour, that the difference of hue between the illumined parts of a white and black object is not so great as the difference, in sunshine, between the illumined and dark side of either separately."

Will the writer for the *Globe* be so good as to point out the contradiction? This last passage, indeed, says:— "Light and *shade* conquer distinctions of local colour." It does not say that *light* alone does. In the first passage I say: "Raise white a certain height, and raise black as far, and still they are at the same distance from each other; or, in other terms, raise 6 to 12 and 0 to 6, and they are still 6 apart." In the second passage I say: "That this difference, whatever it may at any moment be, is not so great as the difference between the full light and full shadow of a given colour in sunshine."

Of course this does not mean dim sunshine, or that dark sides may not by reflected light become nearly as bright as light sides; but it expresses, in few words, this most important and stern fact, that, while the resources of art always easily equal the most violent distinctions of local colours or patterns, they are utterly inadequate to express the depths of gradation between full sunshine and full shadow in any given colour—so that Albert Dürer, and all the great masters of form, are compelled to leave all local colour as pure *white*, in order to get the gradations between it and the shadow. In Albert Dürer's best plate, the "Adam and Eve"[2]—highly finished as it is—the green leaves are represented as pure white, in order to get them even approximately raised above the shadow; and even then half of the intermediate gradations are missed.

The great colourists always chose, of course, to give the other side of the scale of truth. They gave the local colours truly, and sank or subdued the gradations of shadow

[1] [Vol. i. pt. ii. sec. i. ch. v. § 8 (in this edition, Vol. III. p. 162).]
[2] [For a note of other references to this plate, see Vol. V. p. 159.]

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—Veronese giving the type of the perfect statement of local colour, Tintoret striking the exact balance between him and the Chiaroscurists, and Rembrandt representing as much as was possible of the truth of the opposite scale.[1]

Millais is a great colourist, and, of course, works on the principles of the colourists. The question respecting his picture is one respecting the distinctions of local colour, and that question I have simply and sufficiently answered; nor would any one have been embarrassed by the answer who had ever seen a coal fire, unless the unfortunate writer for the *Globe* had done his best to communicate to them the infection of his misunderstanding. The press does good service in many things, but it is a wonderful instrument for the dissemination of imbecility; and there is this mischief in the nature of things, very prettily illustrated by the subject we are upon of local colour, that dulness, like local blackness, "is always black, however high you raise the light that falls upon it"; but as all whiteness may entirely cease to be white in the night, so there is no perspicuity which a resolute bluntness cannot obscure.

Thus much of answer may suffice touching what the writer for the *Globe* ventures to assert on his own responsibility; but his mention of Mr. Leslie[2] obliges me to say a few words respecting this artist, which I had intended to reserve for another place and another time.[3]

There has perhaps never been a greater master than Leslie of the phases of such delicate expression on the

[1] [In the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, published in the year following the date of these *Notes*, Ruskin returned to this subject and elaborated it. See ch. iii., "Of Turnerian Light" (Vol. VI. p. 48).]

[2] [The article in the *Globe* was a review conjointly of Ruskin's *Academy Notes* for 1855 and C. R. Leslie's *Handbook for Young Painters*. Leslie's experience as a painter was referred to as investing his critical dicta with great authority, and the reviewer quoted Leslie's criticisms of *Modern Painters* as disposing of Ruskin's claims.]

[3] [Charles Robert Leslie (1794–1859), A.R.A. 1821, R.A. 1826. From 1848 to 1851 he was Professor of Painting at the Academy. Ruskin returned to praise Leslie's skill in subsequent issues of the *Notes* (see below, pp. 105, 222, 223). Ruskin was on friendly terms with Leslie and his family: see *Dilecta*, in the preface to which book Ruskin says: "The too brief notes of autobiography left by the quietly skilful and modest painter, C. R. Leslie, contain the truest and best-written sketches of the leading men of his time that, so far as I know, exist in domestic literature." Two pictures by Leslie, and several sketches for pictures, are in the Tate Gallery.]

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human face as may be excited by the slight passions and humours of the drawing-room or boudoir. His painting from the *Rape of the Lock*, in last year's Academy, was to my mind an absolute masterpiece,* and perhaps the most covetable picture of its kind which I ever remember seeing by an English artist. Equal to Hogarth in several of its passages of expression, it was raised in some respects above him by the exquisite grace and loveliness of the half-seen face of its heroine, and by the playful yet perfect dignity of its hero. Nor was it less admirable as a reading of Pope; for every subordinate character had been studied with such watchful reverence to every word in which it is alluded to throughout the poem, that it seemed to me as if the spirit of the poet had risen beside the painter as he worked, and guided every touch of the pencil.

This, and much more than this, I wrote of the picture at the time it appeared, and sent my notice of it to the *Times*, together with one of Hunt and Inchbold. The letter was not inserted; and as the only part of it which I was very desirous to put before the public was that respecting Hunt, and I supposed the letter was too long for the *Times* in the form in which it was first sent, I withdrew the notices of Leslie and Inchbold, and sent it again in this reduced form. It was then inserted;[1] but it has always been a matter of serious regret to me that I had not the opportunity of directing the attention of the public specifically to this picture while it was on the Academy walls; and the more so, because it must very soon become my painful task to expose the weakness of the Author, when I would willingly

* His picture from *Don Quixote*, this year, is less important, but full of admirable power.[2]

[1] [The *Times*, May 5, 1854. The picture by Hunt was "The Light of the World." Inchbold had no picture in the Academy of 1854; in 1853 he had one, "The Chapel, Bolton." On May 25 appeared a further letter from Ruskin, noticing the same painter's "The Awakening Conscience." The letters are given in Vol. XII. pp. 328-335. The unprinted portion of the former has not been found among Ruskin's MSS.]

[2] [The picture of 1855 was No. 95, "Sancho Panza and Dr. Pedro Rezio." The picture of 1854 was No. 192, "Sir Plume demands the restoration of the Lock."]

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have confined myself to praise of the Painter.[1] The power over slight and passing expression is always a separate gift, eminently possessed by many caricaturists (for instance, in the highest degree by Leech[2]); and it has never, I believe, in a single instance, been consistent with any understanding of the qualities of the highest art. It was, therefore, the extreme of rashness in Mr. Leslie to attempt a work of criticism on historical or sacred painting. But it was worse than rashness — it was an inexcusable want of sense, to venture, farther, into the criticism of landscape art; and his work, instead of becoming what it was intended to be by the ingenious Mr. Murray, a guide to young painters, will remain a perpetual warning to painters advanced in life, not to suppose that by watching the smiles of coquettes they can learn to appreciate the ideals of the masters of religious art, or, by a life spent among the sophistications of the world, become sharers in the spirit of the great painters who have communed with the heart of Nature.

[1] [In 1855 Leslie published his Academy lectures under the title *A Handbook for Young Painters*. Among other statements, Leslie found fault with the work of Francia as insipid. He made also several direct criticisms upon Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (*e.g.*, pp. 245, 268–278). Ruskin's retort, in the passage above, was supplemented in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. App. i. (where allusion is made to "Mr. Leslie's unadvised and unfortunate *réchauffé* of the fallacious art-maxims of the last century"); and in vol. iv. App. i., where, with reference to Leslie's criticism of Francia, Ruskin says: "Even those whose work is of higher aim, and wrought habitually in colour, are prevented by their pursuit of *piquant* expression from understanding noble expression." See also below, p. 220.]

[2] [See below, pp. 332–334.]

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II

# NOTES

ON SOME OF

# THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF THE

# ROYAL ACADEMY,

AND THE

# SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

No. II.—1856

By JOHN RUSKIN, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "MODERN PAINTERS," "STONES OF VENICE," "SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE," ETC., ETC.

*WITH POSTSCRIPT*

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 65, CORNHILL.
1856.

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[*Bibliographical Note.*—Of the second number of *Academy Notes* there were six editions :—

*First Edition* (1856).—The title-page was as on the preceding page, except that the words "With Postscript" were omitted. An octavo pamphlet (stabbed and without wrappers) of 48 pp. Half-title (with blank reverse), pp. 1–2 ; title-page (with an advertisement of the *Notes* of 1855, 3rd edition, on the reverse), pp. 3–4 ; preface (here pp. 43–46), pp. 5–10 ; text of the notes, pp. 11–48. Imprint at the foot of the last page—"London : Printed by Smith, Elder and Co., 15, Old Bailey." No headlines, the pages being numbered centrally. Issued on May 9 ; price Sixpence.

*Second Edition* (1856).—Except for the words "Second Edition" on the title-page, this was an exact reprint of the first. Four numbered pages of advertisements of "Mr. Ruskin's Works on Art" were added at the end.

*Third Edition* (1856).—To this edition, a postscript (here pp. 85–87) of three pages was added, and the imprint was removed to the reverse of p. 51. On the title-page "Third Edition. | With Postscript." Otherwise a reprint of the former editions. In addition to the four pages of advertisements, a Catalogue (of 16 numbered pages) of books published by Smith, Elder and Co. was bound up at the end.

*Fourth Edition* (1856).—An exact reprint of the Third, with the number of the edition altered on the title-page. Smith, Elder & Co.'s Catalogue was reduced from 16 to 8 pages.

*Fifth Edition* (1856).—An exact reprint of Fourth, with the number of the edition altered on the title-page.

*Sixth Edition* (1856).—The number altered on the title-page ; the Postscript was less leaded and concluded on p. 50, at the foot of which page is the imprint. The Catalogue consists of 14 pages. Otherwise an exact reprint of the previous editions.

*Reprinted* in 1902 in *Ruskin on Pictures*, vol. ii. pp. 35–74.

*Reviews* appeared in the *Economist*, May 24, 1856 ; the *Leader*, May 17 ; the *Art Journal*, June 1856, N.S., vol. 2, p. 196 ; the *Guardian*, July 16 (of *Modern Painters*, vol. iv., also).

In the *National Review* (edited by R. H. Hutton and W. Bagehot), July 1856, vol. 3, pp. 80–106, there was a sympathetic appreciation of Ruskin's work generally, headed "Pictures and Picture Criticism," and reviewing among other works *Academy Notes* for 1855 and 1856.]

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# PREFACE

In presenting the second number of these *Notes* to the public, distinguished as they are from most of the criticism brought under their notice, by the writer's attaching his name to them, I may perhaps be permitted one or two words respecting the probable difference, in aim, between anonymous and acknowledged criticism; and this the rather, that I found, last year, the offence which the work, in its very nature, could not but give, seemed to be deepened instead of diminished by the fact of its being openly owned to, and I was bitterly accused of malice or unkindness, as if malice were usually the most outspoken passion in the world, and unkindness always the greater when it was ready to answer for itself.

It is evident that there can be but three reasons for a writer's concealment of his personality. Either, firstly, having confidence in what he has written, he must have none in his name (as I wrote the first volume of *Modern Painters*, sure of the truth of what I wrote, but fearing that I might not obtain fair hearing if the reader knew my youth[1]). Or, secondly, he may know that his name would carry some weight with it, but may be ashamed of what he has written. Or, thirdly, there may be dangers of private loss or inconvenience, which he cannot speak openly without incurring, and which to avoid he must get his opinion uttered as best he may, namelessly. Generally, I believe, the last reason to be the only legitimate one; and that, though in rare instances it may be wisdom to try to obtain a hearing under a masque, which would be refused if the

[1] [Ruskin was twenty-four when the first volume of *Modern Painters* was published. For a reference to its anonymous publication, see *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 250.]



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face were shown, in all ordinary cases it should be not only with the voice, but with the eyes, that men should address their fellows. I never felt at ease in my "graduate" incognito; and although I consented, some nine years ago, to review Lord Lindsay's *Christian Art*, and Sir Charles Eastlake's *Essay on Oil Painting*, in the *Quarterly*, I have ever since steadily refused to write even for that once respectable periodical.*

But, as touching these *Notes*, of which I hope to continue the series yearly, I trust that the reader will feel that I have given him the best guarantee in my power of their sincere purpose, in signing them. If he thinks I always see the brightest colours in the works of my friends, or that it can only be in rooted malice that I point out an error in perspective, I have put it in his power to inquire into these matters, and to ascertain for himself whether indeed it is always a friend's work that I praise, or whether the transgressor of perspective law is conscious of any personal enmity between himself and me. And truly, it is

* It has lately, I observe, in consequence, sought to amuse its readers by some account of my private affairs; of which—if the writer of the article in question is not ashamed of *his* name—I shall be happy to furnish him with more accurate details, as well as to recommend him to a school where he may learn what will not in future be disadvantageous to his writings—a little more astronomy and optics.[1]

[1] [Ruskin's reviews of Lindsay and Eastlake appeared in the numbers for June 1847 and March 1848. They are reprinted in Vol. XII. (pp. 169–302), where (pp. xxxix.–xli.) Ruskin's reasons for writing the reviews, and Lockhart's editorial treatment of them are dealt with. The *Quarterly* for March 1856 contained a review of *Modern Painters*, vols. i., ii., iii., and of the first number of *Academy Notes*. The reviewer began (and ended) with "an analysis of the author himself." He was accused of an entire absence of moral qualities, of "a cold and hardened habit"; "an unfeeling heart"; and of "malice, bitterness, and uncharitableness." It was asked, "How does it happen that this man never descends from his mountains—'the pure and holy hills,' as he calls them—without stumbling on that particular kind 'of young lady who, rising in the middle of the day, jaded by her last night's ball,'" etc., etc. Ruskin was also attacked for having renounced his trusteeship under Turner's will (see Introduction to Vol. XIII. p. xxx.), and was accused of "endeavouring to have the expenses of his lawyer's investigation defrayed from Turner's estate." With regard to "optics" and "astronomy," the reviewer devoted a good deal of space to controverting Ruskin's criticisms upon the representations of light and sun in the old masters. The author of the *Quarterly* article was Lady Eastlake (Elizabeth Rigby), wife of the P.R.A., whose pictures had been criticised in the *Notes* (see above, p. 13). (See *Letters and Journals of Lady Eastlake*, ii. 82).]

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a sorrowful thing to me, and one bearing witness, very bitterly, to the dishonesty of criticism in general, that people should be so ready to call every kind of fault-finding "hostility," the moment they can bring it home to a known person. One would think, to hear them, that there was no right or wrong in art; that every opinion which men formed of it was dictated by prejudice, and expressed in passion; that all praise was treacherous—all rebuke malignant—and silence itself merely a pause of hesitation between Flattery and Slander.

That it must sometimes be so, I am forced to believe, since the imputation of such dishonesty is constant; and it is strange, as well as frightful, to reflect how many forms of guilt are involved in one dishonest criticism. A common thief steals only property; a dishonest critic steals property, together with Fame, and the power of being useful. A common thief steals, for the most part, in imperfect knowledge of right; but a dishonest critic steals wittingly, and with all advantages of education. A common thief steals "to satisfy his soul when he is hungry";[1] but a dishonest critic, to satisfy his soul when he is envious. A common liar risks the discovery, and bears the penalty, of his own falsehood; but a lying critic shrinks behind his associates, and diffuses the discredit of his falsehood, while he multiplies its influence. A common liar, being discovered, leaves other men's honour unscathed; a lying critic, discovered, has infected with his own disgrace the men behind whom he stooped, and cast suspicion over the general honour of his race.

This, and much more than this, is the real character of all anonymous writers against conscience; and the evil of it would be too great to be, with a remnant of charity, imputed to any human being, were it not that men continually commit their most blamable acts in the mere dulness of habit, and are like dogs taught to pilfer, in whom

[1] [Proverbs vi. 30.]

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we pardon, to the imperfect nature, what would be unpardonable in a rational one.

It is little to say that I am free from guilt such as this. I have striven, from the first day when I began to write, to reach an impartiality far beyond that of mere uprightness. It is possible to be thoroughly upright, and yet unconsciously partial—continually deceived by personal associations or instincts. I have striven for that higher impartiality, which can only be obtained by labour in conquering predilections, by toil in the successive study of opponent schools, and earnest endeavour to sympathize with the separate spirit of each master I approached. And I can say fearlessly, that although it is not possible, in the time I am able to give to this work, to enter as I should desire into the consideration of every picture examined, yet I approach each of them with a distinct effort to gain the point of aspect by which its painter intended it to be commanded, and with a personal experience of the difficulties of various art, which renders me as charitable to true effort as disdainful of attempts to be great without labour. I say this, once for all, and the reader will perhaps pardon me this length of preface, since it is to assure him that I do not write these *Notes* carelessly, nor look upon them as things of little importance. I look upon them, on the contrary, as one of the chief works which I have henceforward to do; and though, from its very nature, it must always be done hastily, it never will be done thoughtlessly, nor without the earnest hope that the pain I may have to give by unwilling blame, may be more than counterbalanced by the help which I know even the best painters may derive from the expression of an eager sympathy, and a faithful praise.

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# EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

If the reader, before fixing his attention on any particular work, will glance generally round any of the rooms, he will be struck by a singular change in the character of the entire exhibition. He will find that he can no longer distinguish the Pre-Raphaelite works as a separate class, but that between them and the comparatively few pictures remaining quite of the old school, there is a perfectly unbroken gradation, formed by the works of painters in various stages of progress, struggling forward out of their conventionalism to the Pre-Raphaelite standard. The meaning of this is simply that the battle is completely and confessedly won by the latter party; that animosity has changed into emulation, astonishment into sympathy, and that a true and consistent school of art is at last established in the Royal Academy of England.

Such an exhibition I have never yet seen, and the excellence of it is all the more to be rejoiced in because it is every whit progressive. It does not consist merely in the splendour of the work of one noble artist, urged to unusual exertion (though this it can boast), nor in an accidental assemblage of the happiest efforts of several (though by this also it is adorned); but in the achievement which has rewarded the steady effort of all, now at last turned in the right direction, and ensuring for each, in process of time, such utmost success as his genius is capable of. There is hardly an exhibitor this year who has not surpassed himself, and who will not surpass himself again in every subsequent effort; and I know that they must feel this, and



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must be as happy in their sense of sudden power, and in the perception of the new world opened to their sincerity, as we spectators have cause to be in the gifts of art they offer us.

As for my own special work, I look upon it as now almost supererogatory—I have little to do but to multiply monotonous terms of praise; for, now that nearly every picture in the room has a meaning, and the observer is thus led to expect one, and to exert his attention, I believe that people will easily distinguish such meanings for themselves, without the impertinence of explanation; and as for minor fault-finding, I hold it generally useless in the cases of artists who mean well, and are painting from Nature. They will gradually find out their faults for themselves, and the spectator ought seldom to have his attention withdrawn from the real merits by any carping at passages of failure. Last year several pictures, in which to point to anything was to point to an error, were put into the best places, when it was right at once to mark their demerit, in order to check this system of complimentary precedence. But this year the worst pictures are, for the most part, in retired places, and there I shall have pleasure in leaving them. If I find fault with any others, it is either to help the observer in forming his judgment of art in general, or to suggest a possibly better mode of practice to the painter.

### 10. Christmas Day, in St. Peter's, at Rome, 1854. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*)

The change above spoken of is very manifest in this, the first picture of importance enough to attract the eye. It is both careful and brilliant; and though I do not myself like the subject (caring neither for the architecture nor the pomp of St. Peter's),[1] I can answer for the faithful delineation of what must be to most people a striking scene.

[1] [See Vol. I. p. 380; Vol. IV. p. 105; and *Præterita*, ii. ch. ii. § 32.]

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The effect of light and shade in this picture was very difficult, and is studiously wrought — note, for instance, the pretty and true change in the colour of the red cross in the dome, where it is half in shade and half in sun.

8. THE ROADSIDE SPRING, YORKSHIRE. (*E. C. Booth.*)

From the pomp of marble and strength of multitude, let us turn back to this quiet nook beside the wild Yorkshire road, and consider a little whether the truer grandeur is in those lifted aisles or in this fragment of grey wall, overwaved by its few ears of corn, and ringing to the low voice of its lonely brooklet. The picture is not a first-rate one—it is not even a very special example of the advancing school; but the mind of the painter has been in happy tone when he chose his subject, and if you examine it, kneeling (there is no other way), as perhaps you would those flowers and grass by the roadside itself, I think you will have pleasure in watching the delicate tracery of the bush leaves, and the stoop of the poppy over the wall, and the soft moss and grass in its crannies, and the clear water, just making the road a little browner where it spreads over it. I cannot answer for the feelings of others, but I think there is more benediction to be had here than out of the magnificence of St. Peter's.

17. "LOVE'S LABOUR LOST." (*F. R. Pickersgill, A.*[1])

This picture presents the same elements of advance in a yet more curious and striking way. Mr. Pickersgill is already a Pre-Raphaelite in purpose, and only fails—as when artists first begin to work thoroughly from Nature they always fail—by painting the easiest things too definitely better than the rest. I do not mean that they ought to paint the easy things worse, but only that a discordance is

[1] [Frederick Richard Pickersgill (1820–1890) began to exhibit at the Academy in 1839. In 1847 he was elected A.R.A., and in 1857 R.A. He was Keeper from 1873 to 1887. For an earlier reference to him, see the "Addenda" (being Notes on the Academy in 1848) to *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 339.]



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always felt in this stage of their study between the good accessory parts and failing principal ones. It is to be mended by conquering the difficult, not by surrendering the easy. If we examine the jewellery of the lady dressed in blue, in the centre, or the golden brocade of the one on the left, we shall find them very nearly right; the grass is also coming fast right; but Mr. Pickersgill cannot yet paint a face. A little more hard work, taking his models just as they come, without any fear or flattery, and he will win his spurs.

35. HOME. (*J. N. Paton.*[1])

A most pathetic and precious picture, easily understood, and entirely right as far as feeling is concerned. Mr. Paton must have had more pleasure in painting this picture than in those fairy assemblies of his; and though the cottage details here are not so attractive as those nightshade and woodbine convolutions of leaf scenery, they are in reality better painted, and serve to better use. Mr. Paton has, however, a good deal yet to learn in colour. He should for this spring paint nothing but opening flowers, and, in the autumn, nothing but apricots and peaches.[2]

39. THE STREAM FROM LLYN IDWAL, CARNARVONSHIRE. (*A. W. Hunt.*[3])

The best landscape I have seen in the exhibition for many a day—uniting most subtle finish and watchfulness of

[1] [Sir Joseph Noel Paton (1821–1902), appointed Her Majesty's Limner for Scotland in 1866. The pictures by which he first made his mark were of fairy-land—such as "The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania," "The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania," and "The Fairy Queen." He had made the acquaintance of Millais as a student at the Academy in 1843; and afterwards he was in sympathy with the Pre-Raphaelite group. The picture noticed above represented a soldier, mortally wounded, who has just reached home, and sinks down on a chair, tended by his mother and sweetheart. For Ruskin's acquaintance with Paton, see Vol. XII. p. xxvii. To the painter's "fairy assemblies" Ruskin again referred in *The Art of England*, ch. iv.]

[2] [Compare p. 156, below.]

[3] [Alfred William Hunt (1830–1896) was at this time twenty-six years of age, and was still hesitating between a scholastic and an artistic career. It is said that the hanging of this picture on the line at the Academy and Ruskin's favourable notice of it turned the scale. He and Ruskin became friends (see p. 298), and he was god-father to one of the artist's daughters. Some reminiscences of Ruskin by

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Nature, with real and rare power of composition. The mass of mountain in the centre is grandly arranged, so as best to set off the action of its contour, and contrasted with the diagonal cleavages of rock on the left: note how they run from the foreground up to the crest of the hill. The *rents* of cloud, and fading or forming of the hill shadows through them, are magnificently expressed. It only wants a little more subtlety in the finish of the gradations: portions of those clouds ought to be stippled so delicately that the eye could not trace the outmost touches—this would also give them more depth and unity. Seen a little way off, the work is spotty, at present, and wants bringing together; the worst part being the dappled blue sky on the left, in which the blue is not pure, nor the clouds soft, nor well set. The sheep in the foreground look too small—not but that real sheep in a Welsh foreground often do; but it is the painter's business to avoid this, and make everything look of its real size.

58. CINDERELLA, AFTER HER SISTERS HAVE LEFT FOR THE BALL. (*Miss E. Turck.*)

Very pretty, and well studied; but Cinderella does not look like the lady of a fairy tale. I am rather puzzled myself to know how her relationship to her remarkable godmother could best be indicated, so as to leave her still a quite *real* little lady in a real kitchen. But I am glad to see this sternly realistic treatment, at all events.

59. THE WHITE OWL. (*W. J. Webbe.*)

A careful study—the brown wing excellent. The softness of an owl's feathers is perhaps inimitable; but I think the breast might have come nearer the mark.

another daughter (Miss Violet Hunt) were contributed to the *Westminster Gazette* of Feb. 3, 1900. Hunt continued from time to time to paint in oils, but water-colour was his favourite medium. He was elected an associate of the Old Water-Colour Society in 1862, and a full member in 1864. For a notice of a drawing of his exhibited in 1871, see *Eagle's Nest*, § 129 *n.* There is a fine water-colour by him in the Tate Gallery (No. 1703). An exhibition of his drawings was held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1897 (Memoir in the Catalogue by Cosmo Monkhouse).]

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68. Little Red Riding-Hood. (*R. Redgrave, R.A.*)

Mr. Redgrave has, as far as I know, never painted so good a landscape. The ferns in the centre are beautiful; and there is evidence of painstaking and of good feeling everywhere.

75. The Last Parting of Marie Antoinette and her Son. (*E. M. Ward, R.A.*[1])

I fear this picture must be excepted from the progressive list, and marked as one of the representations of the old school; but it is not a bad one.

94. The Abandoned. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

Perhaps this also is rather a fortunate example of the artist's work than a new phase of it. But I never saw a Stanfield I liked so well: the sea is superb—quite Turnerian in the mystery of the farther waves—and the sentiment of the picture very grand; and that not by means of twilight, or sunset, or moonlight, or any strangeness of arrangement or elaboration of idea, but by simple fact of deserted ship and desert sea.[2]

101. The Greetings in the Desert, Egypt—"Selamat" Teiyibeen. (*J. F. Lewis.*)

The superposition of this picture to "West Australian"[3] is the first glaring piece of bad hanging I note in the Academy this year. Mr. Cooper's picture, whatever its merits may be, is executed so as to have been seen quite as well in the upper place; while Mr. Lewis's cannot be seen in the least but on the line. It would take no trouble,

[1] [Edward Matthew Ward (1816–1879) was elected R.A. in the preceding year. Several of his historical pictures are in the Tate Gallery.]

[2] [For another reference to this picture, see *The Harbours of England*, § 19 *n.*, Vol. XIII. p. 29.]

[3] [A picture of a horse so named, No. 100, by A. Cooper, R.A., for whom see p. 219.]

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any afternoon when the Academy closes, to change the places; and I am sure that Mr. Cooper would, in enforcing such an arrangement, be felt to have paid a just tribute to the talents of a great brother-artist, and to have done himself little injury and much honour.

Of the style of Mr. Lewis's picture I need only say that it is like that of his work in general, and refer the reader to the note on the example of it in the rooms of the Water-Colour Society (p. 73). There is, however, a very curious and skilful circumstance in the composition here: the neck of the camel was too serpentine, and stopped too abruptly after suggesting this undulation of line. The white cloud beyond at once varies, and continues, this serpentine tendency, leading it away towards the upper edge of the picture, while the straight flakes of cloud, descending obliquely to the right, oppose the two upright peaks of the saddle.

I may as well refer at once to Mr. Lewis's other work, 336[1] (the Academy is rich in possessing two). How two such pictures have been executed, together with the drawing for the Water-Colour Society, all within the year, is to me wholly inconceivable; there seems a year's work in 336 alone. Yet it is not a favourable example of the master—the toil being too palpable and equal on the stones in the reflected light; where also there is neither colour nor form of interest enough to justify it. The draperies and trellis-work are faultlessly marvellous.

181. "MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY." (*W. P. Frith, R.A.*)

A taking picture, much, it seems to me, above Mr. Frith's former standard. Note the advancing Pre-Raphaelitism in the wreath of leaves round the child's head.[2] One

[1] ["Street Scene in Cairo, near the Babel Luk."]

[2] [Mr. Frith does not seem to have been duly grateful for Ruskin's qualified praise. "Ruskin's works," he writes, "bristle with errors; one of his notable ones was his saying, on the discovery of a bit of what he took for Pre-Raphaelite work in one of the worst pictures I ever painted, that I was 'at last in the right way,' or words to that effect."—*My Autobiography*, vol. iii. p. 5.]

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is only sorry to see any fair little child having too many and too kind friends, and in so great danger of being toasted, toyed, and wreathed into selfishness and misery.

138. Mr. David Cox. (*Sir J. W. Gordon, R.A.*[1])

A very noble portrait, and, in the unassuming but powerful features, thoroughly characteristic. I am heartily glad to see this work of honour to a good painter so well accomplished.

145. Geraniums. (*Miss Mutrie.*[2])

146. Roses. (*Miss A. F. Mutrie.*)

I cannot say more of the work of the two Misses Mutrie than I have said already. It is nearly as good as simple flower-painting can be; the only bettering it is capable of would be by more able composition, or by the selection, for its subject, of flowers growing naturally. Why not a roadside bank of violets? 335 and 342 are the best examples, by these artists, in this exhibition.[3]

147. Saved! (*Sir E. Landseer, R.A.*[4])

I wish this picture had not been put so high, for the bolder Landseer is in handling, the more interesting his work becomes, under close observance: nor does his peculiar system of clay-colouring gain at all in effect by distance. I never saw a child fall into water, nor a dog bring one out; but under such circumstances are not its clothes usually wet? and do not wet clothes cling to the limbs?

[1] [Sir John Watson Gordon (1790–1864) became the chief portrait-painter in Scotland on the death of Raeburn in 1823. He was knighted in 1850, on becoming President of the Royal Scottish Academy, and in the same year he was elected R.A. His portrait of David Cox is now in the Birmingham and Midland Institute.]

[2] [Miss Martha Darley Mutrie (1824–1885) studied at the Manchester School of Design, then under George Wallis, and first exhibited at the Academy in 1853. She was elder sister of Miss A. F. Mutrie. (See above, p. 7.) There are examples of the work of both sisters in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

[3] [335. "Orchids," by Miss A. F. Mutrie. · 342. "Primulas," by Miss Mutrie.]

[4] [For a summary of Ruskin's references to Landseer, see Vol. IV. p. 334 *n.*]

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155. HER MAJESTY THE EMPRESS EUGENIE.[1] (*E. Boutibonne.*)

This would have been a really admirable portrait but for its foggy and slovenly distance. Complete that, and the work would look almost like life.

160. THE LETTER. (*E. Delfosse.*)

A fair example of a peculiar, and very clever, though perhaps I should hardly call it meritorious, style, lately much adopted by French artists. It is a mannerism of softness, and subduing of all very bright colours—more or less successful in result, of course, according to the painter's general powers; but yet seeming to be taught in schools of art so extensive and so popular as to assimilate a large number of painters not only in style, but in aim, and prevent their emerging from a charmed circle of subjects—consisting usually of pretty women, sprightly in expression, but rather blunt in chiselling of features, wearing prettily brocaded dresses, and doing nothing, prettily. These works seem to be gradually constituting a species of manufacture, which supplies the French drawing-rooms with pictures, as Sèvres does with china. Nevertheless, one very original painter belongs to this school, of whom more presently.*

162. THE GRACES. (*W. E. Frost, A.*[2])

I believe Mr. Frost might be a painter if he chose; but he will not become one by multiplying studies of this kind, looking like Etty's with all the colour scraped off. Everybody knows well enough, by this time, that Graces always stand on one leg, and bend the other, and never have anything to fasten their dresses with at the waists. Cannot Mr. Frost tell us something new?

* See Notes on French Exhibition at the close of the pamphlet, p. 83.

[1] [This picture was the property of Queen Victoria, and hangs in the Lower Corridor at St. James's Palace. The same artist painted four companion portraits (which are also at St. James's Palace) of the Queen and Prince Albert, and the Emperor Napoleon and Empress Eugenie, all on horseback (the horses by Herring).]

[2] [William Edward Frost (1810–1877) had been introduced to Etty at an early age, and followed that master's style. He was elected A.R.A. in 1846, and R.A. in 1871. His principal works were all of mythological subjects.]

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175. THE EMPEROR CHARLES V. AT YUSTE. (*A. Elmore, A.*[1])

One of the works still belonging wholly to the old school. There is a good deal of fair painting in it, but an extraordinary missing of the main mark throughout. See the second paragraph of the long quotation in the catalogue:—

"Again the afternoon sun was shining over the great walnut-tree, full into the gallery. From this pleasant spot, filled with the fragrance of the garden and the murmur of the fountain, and bright with glimpses of the golden Vera, they carried him to the gloomy chamber of his sleepless nights, and laid him on the bed from which he was to rise no more." [From Stirling-Maxwell's *Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V.*[2]]

Naturally we expect the painter to take some pains (as he has given this quotation) in the expression of verdure, fragrance, and sunshine. But the walnut-tree is grey, not green; the air, judging by the look of it, cannot be perfumed by anything but paint; and there is no sunshine anywhere, while the whitish light, which is given for it, shines not over the tree into the gallery, but from the back of the spectator. The exhibited pictures, by Titian (!), are greyer than all the rest. Charles must have bought them from an exceedingly dishonest dealer.

200. PEACE CONCLUDED, 1856.[3] (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

I thought, some time ago, that this painter was likely to be headed by others of the school; but Titian himself could hardly head him now. This picture is as brilliant in invention as consummate in executive power; both this and "Autumn Leaves," 448, will rank in future among the world's best masterpieces; and I see no limit to what the painter

[1] [Alfred Elmore (1815–1881) was elected R.A. in the year following this exhibition. He continued to paint historical pictures.]

[2] [The passage is at p. 340 of the edition of 1891.]

[3] [For this picture (popularly known as "The Return from the Crimea") Colonel Malcolm sat for the wounded officer, and Lady Millais for the wife. It is now in the possession of Mr. T. H. Miller, of Preston.]

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may hope in future to achieve. I am not sure whether he may not be destined to surpass all that has yet been done in figure-painting, as Turner did all past landscape.*

221. THE BREAKWATER AT PLYMOUTH. (*F. R. Lee, R.A.*[1])

It is long since Mr. Lee painted such a picture as this; nor, as far as I recollect, has any one else yet so faithfully rendered the sweep of large waves over level wall. The sense of space is very great throughout, and there is really fine feeling and treatment in the dying away of the successive spray-clouds at the end of the long path of stone. There are several studies of sea by Mr. Lee this year which seem to me to mark quite a new energy in his mind: all of them are earnest, and entirely separated from the usual types of conventional gale and wave. This is the best, but 318 ["Breaking up a Wreck"] is another good example. Its rock foreground is evidently painted from Nature, and is very fine in form; though there are awkward flaws here and there, the consequence seemingly of prolonged habits, hardly broken off, of working without reference to fact. For instance, in the calm pool of water on the left, the stones on the left side have reflections, but those on the right side none.

230. MASTER ISAAC NEWTON IN HIS GARDEN AT WOOLSTHORPE IN THE AUTUMN OF 1665. (*R. Hannah.*)

One of the somewhat incipient pictures of the rising school, but of considerable merit. The Nemesis of Pre-Raphaelitism is its way of fixing on precisely the ugliest

* Note the hint for bringing more of Nature into our common work, in the admirable modelling of the polar bear and lion, though merely children's toys.

[1] [Frederick Richard Lee (1799–1879) is characterized at some length by Ruskin in the preface to the second edition of vol. i. of *Modern Painters*. A writer in *Blackwood*, whose critical capacity was challenged by Ruskin, had written of Lee that he "often reminds us of Gainsborough's best manner; but he is superior to him always in subject, composition, and variety." Ruskin demolishes this comparison, but speaks of Lee's works as "well-intentioned, simple, free from affectation or imitation, and evidently painted with constant reference to Nature." See Vol. III. p. 18.]

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things it can find to paint. I don't believe there is such another uninteresting tree-trunk within a circle of ten miles round London, as the one in the centre of this, Sir Isaac's garden. The execution is also hard, though careful: one of the most successful bits is the head of Diamond; not content with "amusing himself with a book," but having also half a mind to the apple, and proposing speedily to interfere with, if not prevent altogether, the discovery of the solar system.[1]

262. THE VILLAGE POSTMAN. (*J. M. Carrick.*[2])

If the reader glances along the various pictures hung near the floor, in any of the rooms, he will find that nearly every other one consists of an attentive study; there is, indeed, so much care taken with so many minor works that it becomes impossible to distinguish all as they deserve, and I may, perhaps, have missed some that contain more than study —real achievement. But I can only name this one, as a leading specimen, out of a large number not by any means perfect, but presenting many interesting natural scenes and thoughts, and highly conscientious in execution. There has been immense labour in this picture, and it is very genuine throughout: the old stone-slated roof and ivy are first-rate, and the figures of the child and its grandfather coming out slowly to see if there is indeed a letter, wrought with more than usual fidelity to rustic character.

295. "AND THE PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE SICK." (*J. Phillip.*)

I never yet saw so much progress made by any painter in one year as Mr. Phillip has made, from his stiff black

[1] [The following quotation from Sir David Brewster's *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton*, vol. i. ch. ii., was given in the Academy Catalogue: "When sitting alone in the garden, and speculating on the power of gravity, it occurred to him, that as the same power by which the apple fell to the ground, . . . it might extend to the moon and retain her in her orbit." According to Brewster, the popular anecdotes about Newton's dog Diamond, the constant but incurious attendant of his master's researches, are purely mythical (*ibid.*, ii. 138).]

[2] [J. M. Carrick was one of the members of the Hogarth Club (1859), to which Ruskin, D. G. Rossetti, and most of the men in sympathy with the Pre-Raphaelite movement, belonged.]

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and red figures and fans of last year, to this very sweet picture: the principal head, with its opalescent earring, is quite beautiful. There are several other works of great character and power by this painter.[1]

300. AN INTERIOR. (*F. D. Hardy.*)

An exquisite little piece of interior painting, hurt only by some conventionality in finishing. For instance, how is it possible that, the sunbeams entering only by that one small window, the principal figures should be in full light, or the shadow fall at a steep angle from the knife-handle over the block in the left-hand corner? But, with his powers of execution, a little more faithfulness will make Mr. Hardy a perfect painter in this kind.

311. THE NOVICE. (*J. C. Horsley, A.*[2])

There is always a sweet feeling in Mr. Horsley's pictures. This is an old story, but prettily told—the elder nuns watching anxiously and pitifully, and the dove seeking rest in the bosom.

312. MID-SPRING. (*J. W. Inchbold.*)

Though not a satisfactory picture, this is one of the most curious efforts of the Pre-Raphaelites this year. The place chosen has been a lovely spot, and the execution of the hyacinths and grass is as close and wonderful a piece of work as there is on the room walls. Take a magnifying glass and look at the squirrel and bird on the tree high up on the left, and the two other birds flying in the wood beyond, and give time to the whole, and it will please you. But Mr. Inchbold must choose subjects with more mass

[1] [248. "Agua Fresca: on one of the bridle-roads in Spain." 329. "Dona Pepita." 535. "A Gipsy Water-Carrier of Seville."]

[2] [John Callcott Horsley (1817–1903) was elected A.R.A. in 1855, and R.A. in 1864. His first picture at the Academy (1839) is now in the Tate Gallery (No. 446). He was for many years Treasurer of the Academy, and took an active part in promoting the annual exhibitions of "Old Masters."]

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of shade in them; this was, in its essential nature, impracticable, the light being all too high for imitation. Hence the apparent hardness of result.

It is quite worth while, some day, to bring a small opera-glass with you into the architectural room, to examine the exquisite painting of withered heather, and rock, in Mr. Inchbold's other picture, 1187 ["The Burn, November: the Cucullen Hills"].

320. The Glen, Chudleigh, Devon. (*W. F. Witherington, R.A.*)

Here is another great advance on the picture of last year:[1] hurt a good deal by want of shadow-tone on the figures, and perhaps also by too great richness of subject. This excess of quantity is a grievous temptation to all artists: many of Turner's largest works were destroyed by it.[2] Everything that is beyond the spectator's power of easy attention, and is yet not so perfectly painted as to call for his fully *excited* attention, hurts a picture instead of helping it.

352. Chatterton.[3] (*H. Wallis.*)

Faultless and wonderful: a most noble example of the great school. Examine it well inch by inch: it is one of the pictures which intend, and accomplish, the entire placing before your eyes of an actual fact—and that a solemn one. Give it much time. Mr. Wallis has another very wonderful effort, 516,[4] but it is harder and less successful. I suppose the face of Marvell is a portrait, but he does not look to me like a person who would return a bribe.

[1] [See above, p. 20.]

[2] [Compare *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, Vol. XIII. pp. 129–130.]

[3] [This picture, by Mr. Henry Wallis (*b.* 1830), is now in the Tate Gallery (No. 1685). Ruskin was equally enthusiastic about the painter's Academy pictures in the following years (see pp. 113, 153.]

[4] ["Andrew Marvell returning the Bribe." The subject was explained by the following quotation: "Persuaded that Marvell would be theirs (the Administration's) for properly asking, they sent his old schoolfellow, the Lord Treasurer Danby, to renew acquaintance with him in his garret. At parting, the Lord Treasurer, out of

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398. THE SCAPEGOAT (Lev. xvi.). (*W. H. Hunt.*[1])

**This singular picture, though in many respects faultful, and in some wholly a failure, is yet the one of all in the gallery which should furnish us with most food for thought. First, consider it simply as an indication of the temper and**

*pure affection*, slipped into his hand an order upon the treasury for £1000, and then went to his chariot. Marvell, looking at the paper, calls after the Treasurer, 'My lord, I request another moment.' They went up again to the garret, and Jack, the servant boy, was called. 'Jack, child, what had I for dinner yesterday?' 'Don't you remember, sir, you had the little shoulder of mutton that you ordered me to bring home from a woman in the market?' 'Very right, child. What have I for dinner to-day?' 'Don't you know, sir, that you bid me lay by the *blade bone to broil!*' '"Tis so; very right, child; go away.' 'My lord, do you hear that? Andrew Marvell's dinner is provided; there's your piece of paper—I want it not. I know the sort of kindness you intended. I live here to serve my constituents; the ministry may seek men for their purpose—*I am not one.*'" The passage comes from Hartley Coleridge's *Lives of Northern Worthies*, 1852, vol. i. p. 88.]

[1] [For Ruskin's earliest references to Holman Hunt, see the letters to the *Times* of 1851, reprinted in Vol. XII. pp. 323, 324. In *Lectures on Architecture and Painting* (*ibid.*, pp. 160, 161) Ruskin again called attention to Hunt's work. To the Academy of 1854 the painter sent "The Light of the World" (now in Keble College, Oxford) and "The Awakening Conscience." Ruskin wrote letters to the *Times* (May 5, 25) in description and praise of the pictures (Vol. XII. pp. 328–335). In the third volume of *Modern Painters* (1856) Ruskin referred to Hunt's choice of noble subject; and to his "Light of the World" as "the most perfect instance of expressional purpose with technical power which the world has yet produced." He also defended that picture from the charge of plagiarism (Vol. V. pp. 52, 429). In vol. iv. (1856) Ruskin again referred to Hunt's careful truth to Nature (Vol. VI. p. 80). Ruskin's praise did not avail, however, to find Hunt ready purchasers (see *Contemporary Review*, June 1886); and in the fifth volume of *Modern Painters* (1860) Ruskin refers to him as "fighting his way through all neglect and obloquy to the painting of 'Christ in the Temple'" (pt. ix. ch. xii. § 9). In his later writings Ruskin also occasionally referred to Hunt. In the *Eagle's Nest* (1872), the "Light of the World" is referred to "as the most true and useful piece of religious vision which realistic art has yet embodied" (§ 115); see also *Catalogue of the Educational Series*, No. 2. In his lectures on *The Art of England* (1884), D. G. Rossetti and Holman Hunt were taken by Ruskin as masters of "Realistic Schools of Painting," where a further reference to "The Scapegoat" is made in § 11. With the analysis of Hunt's work there given (with special reference to "The Triumph of the Innocents") should be compared a passage in "The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism" (in *On the Old Road*, i. § 247, reprinted in a later volume of this edition). Holman Hunt's account of the circumstances in which he painted the "Scapegoat," and of the adventures he went through, is given in the *Contemporary Review*, 1886, pp. 829, 830. See also "*Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures in the Holman Hunt Exhibition held at the Fine Art Society*, 1886," p. 9. Rossetti wrote of Hunt's pictures in this year's Academy: "Hunt sends only 'Scapegoat'—a grand thing, but not for the public—and a few lovely landscape drawings." Madox Brown wrote in his diary: "Hunt's 'Scapegoat' requires to be seen to be believed in. Only then can it be understood how, by the might of genius, out of an old goat, and some saline incrustations, can be made one of the most tragic and impressive works in the annals of art." Gambart, the picture-dealer, was less enthusiastic. "I wanted," he said, "a nice religious picture, and he painted me a great goat."]

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aim of the rising artists of England. Until of late years, young painters have been mostly divided into two groups: one poor, hard-working, and suffering, compelled more or less, for immediate bread, to obey whatever call might be made upon them by patron or publisher; the other, of perhaps more manifest cleverness or power, able in some degree to command the market, and apt to make the pursuit of art somewhat complementary to that of pleasure, so that a successful artist's studio has not been in general a place where idle and gay people would have found themselves ill at ease, or at a loss for amusement. But here is a young painter, the slave neither of poverty nor pleasure,—emancipated from the garret, despising the green room, and selecting for his studio a place where he is liable certainly to no agreeable forms of interruption. He travels, not merely to fill his portfolio with pretty sketches, but in as determined a temper as ever mediæval pilgrim, to do a certain work in the Holy Land. Arrived there, with the cloud of Eastern War gathered to the north of him, and involving, for most men, according to their adventurous or timid temper, either an interest which would at once have attracted them to its immediate field, or a terror which would have driven them from work in its threatening neighbourhood, he pursues calmly his original purpose; and while the hills of the Crimea were white with tents of war, and the fiercest passions of the nations of Europe burned in high funeral flames over their innumerable dead, one peaceful English tent was pitched beside a shipless sea, and the whole strength of an English heart spent in painting a weary goat, dying upon its salt sand.

And utmost strength of heart it needed. Though the tradition that a bird cannot fly over this sea is an exaggeration, the air in its neighbourhood is stagnant and pestiferous, polluted by the decaying vegetation brought down by the Jordan in its floods; the bones of the beasts of burden that have died by the "way of the sea,"[1] lie like

[1] [Isaiah ix. 1; Matthew iv. 15.]]

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wrecks upon its edge, bared by the vultures and bleached by the salt ooze, which, though tideless, rises and falls irregularly, swollen or wasted. Swarms of flies, fed on the carcases, darken an atmosphere heavy at once with the poison of the marsh and the fever of the desert; and the Arabs themselves will not encamp for a night amidst the exhalations of the volcanic chasm.

This place of study the young English painter chooses. He encamps a little way above it; sets his easel upon its actual shore; pursues his work with patience through months of solitude; and paints, crag by crag, the purple mountains of Moab, and, grain by grain, the pale ashes of Gomorrah.

And I think his object was one worthy of such an effort. Of all the scenes in the Holy Land, there are none whose present aspect tends so distinctly to confirm the statements of Scripture as this condemned shore. It is therefore exactly the scene of which it might seem most desirable to give a perfect idea to those who cannot see it for themselves; it is that also which fewest travellers are able to see; and which, I suppose, no one but Mr. Hunt himself would ever have dreamed of making the subject of a close pictorial study. The work was therefore worth his effort; and he has connected it in a simple, but most touching way, with other subjects of reflection, by the figure of the animal upon its shore. This is, indeed, one of the instances in which the subject of a picture is wholly incapable of explaining itself; but, as we are too apt—somewhat too hastily—to accept at once a subject as intelligible and rightly painted, if we happen to know enough of the story to interest us in it, so we are apt, somewhat unkindly, to refuse a painter the little patience of inquiry or remembrance, which, once granted, would enable him to interest us all the more deeply, because the thoughts suggested were not entirely familiar. It is necessary, in this present instance, only to remember that the view taken by the Jews of the appointed sending forth of

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the scapegoat into the Wilderness was that it represented the carrying away of their sin into a place uninhabited and forgotten; and that the animal on whose head the sin was laid became accursed, so that, "though not commanded by the law, they used to maltreat the goat Azazel;—to spit upon him, and to pluck off his hair."* The goat, thus tormented, and with a scarlet fillet bound about its brow, was driven by the multitude wildly out of the camp, and pursued into the Wilderness. The painter supposes it to have fled towards the Dead Sea, and to be just about to fall exhausted at sunset—its hoofs entangled in the crust of salt upon the shore. The opposite mountains, seen in the fading light, are that chain of Abarim on which Moses died.[1]

Now, we cannot, I think, esteem too highly, or receive too gratefully, the temper and the toil which have produced this picture for us. Consider for a little while the feelings involved in its conception, and the self-denial and resolve needed for its execution; and compare them with the modes of thought in which our former painters used to furnish us annually with their "Cattle pieces" or "Lake scenes," and I think we shall see cause to hold this picture as one more truly honourable to us, and more deep and sure in its promise of future greatness in our schools of painting, than all the works of "high art" that since the foundation of the Academy have ever taxed the wonder, or weariness, of the English public. But, at the same time, this picture indicates a danger to our students of a kind hitherto unknown in any school—the danger of a too great intensity of feeling, making them forget the requirements of painting as an *art*. This picture regarded merely as a landscape, or as a composition, is a total failure. The mind of the painter has been so excited by the circumstances of the scene, that, like

* Sermon preached at Lothbury, by the Rev. H. Melvill. (*Pulpit*, Thursday, March 27, 1856.[2])

[1] [*Deuteronomy* xxxii. 49, 50.]

[2] [For Melvill, see Vol. I. p. 490 *n*. For the scapegoat, see *Leviticus* xvi. 10.]

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a youth expressing his earnest feeling by feeble verse (which seems to him good, because he *means* so much by it), Mr. Hunt has been blinded by his intense sentiment to the real weakness of the pictorial expression; and in his earnest desire to paint the Scapegoat, has forgotten to ask himself first, whether he could paint a goat at all.

I am not surprised that he should fail in painting the distant mountains; for the forms of large distant landscape are a quite new study to the Pre-Raphaelites, and they cannot be expected to conquer them at first: but it is a great disappointment to me to observe, even in the painting of the goat itself, and of the fillet on its brow, a nearly total want of all that effective manipulation which Mr. Hunt displayed in his earlier pictures. I do not say that there is absolute want of skill—there may be difficulties encountered which I do not perceive—but the difficulties, whatever they may have been, are not conquered: this may be very faithful and very wonderful painting—but it is not *good* painting; and much as I esteem feeling and thought in all works of art, still I repeat, again and again, a painter's business is first to *paint*. No one could sympathize more than I with the general feeling displayed in the "Light of the World"; but unless it had been accompanied with perfectly good nettle painting, and ivy painting, and jewel painting, I should never have praised it;[1] and though I acknowledge the good purpose of this picture, yet, inasmuch as there is no good hair painting, nor hoof painting in it,* I hold it to be good only as an omen, not as an

* I believe, however, the painter was under worse difficulty in painting this goat than even with his sheep picture,[2] it being, of course, impossible to get the animal to stand still for a moment in an attitude indicating utter weariness. Observe also, that though heavily painted, yet being done every whit from Nature, the picture lights the room, far away, just as Turner's used to do (and compare the notes on Nos. 873 and 1002). Only

[1] [See Vol. XII. p. 331.]

[2] ["Strayed Sheep," exhibited at the Academy in 1853—sheep in a cliff landscape, studied near Hastings. Ruskin refers to the picture in the *Art of England* (§ 11) as marking an era in landscape painting. It is in the possession of Mr. George L. Craik, by whom it was lent to the Ruskin Exhibition at Manchester, 1904 (No. 195).]



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achievement; and I have hardly ever seen a composition, left apparently almost to chance, come so unluckily: the insertion of the animal in the exact centre of the canvas making it look as if it were painted for a sign. I can only, therefore, in thanking Mr. Hunt heartily for his work, pray him, for practice' sake, now to paint a few pictures with less feeling in them, and more handling.

418. Subject and painter not yet named in the Catalogue.[1] The former, not very intelligible; the latter is reported to be a younger member of the new school—Mr. Burton. His work is masterly, at all events, and he seems capable of the greatest things.

448. AUTUMN LEAVES.[2] (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

By much the most poetical work the painter has yet conceived; and also, as far as I know, the first instance

Turner never makes a reflection in water brighter than the sky above it, which, unless the crystals of salt whiten the surface even of this glowing water, seems to be the case here. I suppose the water was painted at one season of the year and the sky at another—both from nature, but, in result, discordant, and afterwards unalterable, as the complex hues of those far-followed reflections do not admit of "toning down," but by separately repainting every one. Observe, finally, the picture should, if possible, be seen on a dark day, or in twilight, when its fullest effect is developed.

[1] [They were supplied in later editions of the Academy Catalogue as "A Wounded Cavalier," by W. S. Burton. The subject is a Cavalier whose despatches have been stolen from him as he journeyed through a wood, while he, sorely wounded, has been left to die, until later a Puritan and his lady pass by. She stops to tend the wounded man, while the Puritan looks sourly on. The picture had been overlooked by the Hanging Committee. At the last moment, C. W. Cope, R.A., came upon it in a room by itself with its face to the wall, and withdrew a picture of his own to make room for it. The "Wounded Cavalier" was hung on the line next to Holman Hunt's "Scapegoat." The artist's letter giving the title, etc., was found in time for the second edition of the catalogue. These particulars have been given by Mr. W. S. Burton, who adds a curious story of a conspiracy against him by blackmailing underlings whom he had refused to "tip" (see *The Bazaar*, June 28, 1897). Mr. Burton, who had gained the gold medal at the Academy for historical painting, had his next year's picture—"A London Magdalen"—rejected, and was not more fortunate in later years. An interesting account of this artist, who in recent years resumed the practice of painting, will be found in P. H. Bate's *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters*, p. 81, where also a reproduction of this picture is given.]

[2] [This picture, now in the Corporation Gallery at Manchester, shows four girls piling leaves for autumn burning. The landscape was painted at Annat Lodge,

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existing of a perfectly painted twilight. It is as easy, as it is common, to give obscurity to twilight, but to give the glow within its darkness is another matter; and though Giorgione might have come near the glow, he never gave the valley mist. Note also the subtle difference between the purple of the long nearer range of hills, and the blue of the distant peak emerging beyond.

515. VIEW ON THE BANKS OF THE THAMES AT MAIDENHEAD. (*J. D. Harding.*[1])

A very beautiful and well composed Harding: but *not* a view on the Thames at Maidenhead. The hills in this picture vary from 1,500 to 2,000 feet in height. The clouds are admirably arranged: it is the best composed sky, after Lewis's, that I see in the rooms. But, considering Mr. Harding's well-known skill in trees, I am vexed, partly with myself and partly with him, because, after long consideration, I am totally unable to form a guess as to the species of tree meant in the group to the left.

532. THE PROSPEROUS DAYS OF JOB. (*W. T. C. Dobson.*)

One of the earnest readings of Scripture which are the truest pride of modern art. How often has Job been painted with the look of a haggard, aged, and despairing mendicant—how seldom, in this first era of his life, the refined Oriental lord; leading a life of mercy, and judgment, and truth. The despair indicated in the writhe of the lips and pressure of the knit hands on the head, in the fallen figure, is thoroughly grand; and the watching female figure above is very tender and lovely. All Mr. Dobson's works

Perthshire, an old house with a cedared garden near Bowerswell, which Millais took after his marriage. The two taller girls were Millais's little sisters-in-law, afterwards Mrs. Stibbard and Mrs. Caird; the others were the gardener's children. The picture, it has been said, was the fount of inspiration of Mason and Fred Walker (Spielmann's *Millais and his Works*, p. 92).]

[1] [For James Duffield Harding (1798–1863), Ruskin's drawing-master and friend, see Vol. III. p. 200, Vol. IV. p. xxxv., and the General Index.]

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are good (though this is the best),[1] as far as feeling is concerned; but their colour, or rather want of colour, is deeply to be regretted. Does Mr. Dobson really see Nature as always white and buff—or does he think Buff a specially sacred colour?[2] In *my* mind, it is associated chiefly with troopers' jerkins.

542. MARKET-DAY. (*G. B. O'Neill.*)

Of the old school, but very delicately painted. There is far too much in it to be natural. It is a map of a market-day, instead of a picture of one.

578. APRIL LOVE. (*A. Hughes.*[3])

Exquisite in every way; lovely in colour, most subtle in the quivering expression of the lips, and sweetness of the tender face, shaken, like a leaf by winds upon its dew, and hesitating back into peace.

A second very disgraceful piece of bad placing[4]—the thrusting this picture thus aside!

583. CHIOGGIAN FISHING VESSELS, ETC., RUNNING INTO THE LAGUNE OF VENICE, ON THE APPROACH OF A BORASCO OR VIOLENT SQUALL, ON THE ADRIATIC. (*E. W. Cooke, A.*[5])

Another instance of the extraordinary good fortune which characterizes the exhibition of this year, in possessing

[1] [There was only one other picture by him in the exhibition of 1856—No. 310, "The Parable of the Children in the Market-Place."]

[2] [See below, p. 114, and on the general subject—of the sanctity of colour—see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. pp. 281, 321), vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 68); and Vol. X. pp. 173, 457.]

[3] [Mr. Arthur Hughes (*b.* 1830), though not an enrolled member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, was closely identified with them, and always worked in sympathy with their aims. He combined with Millais and Rossetti to illustrate William Allingham's *Day and Night Songs*, and he was one of the group by whom the frescoes in the Oxford Union were executed. "April Love" was bought from the painter by William Morris. It is now in the possession of Mr. H. Boddington. A reproduction of it, with an appreciation of the painter, may be found in P. H. Bate's *English Pre-Raphaelite Painters*.]

[4] [For the first, see above, p. 52.]

[5] [Edward William Cooke (1811–1880) was promoted to the rank of R.A. in 1864. He "hunted quarries across the foam" in many directions—in Normandy, on the

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the happiest efforts of almost every master. Do any of us recollect so impressive a study of shipping as this by Mr. Cooke, much as he has hunted such quarries across the foam? It is admirably true to the Venetian boat—and the Venetian boat and all the ways of it are beautiful.

592. HIGHLAND MARY. (*T. Faed.*)

Mr. Faed's best work this year; very lovely in its kind; and the distance, though conventional, well composed. Mr. Faed's time for repentance does not seem yet to have come—he will paint grandly, I think, when it does. His other picture[1] is a mere echo of the popular one of last year.

615. MARY MAGDALENE AT THE SEPULCHRE. (*H. Le Jeune.*[2])

Another earnest and most touching reading of Scripture. I never saw that gaze of Mary into the sepulchre

Mediterranean coasts, at Venice, in Spain, and Scandinavia, and Egypt. Several pictures by him are in the Tate Gallery, and pictures and drawings at South Kensington. Ruskin made his acquaintance at Venice in 1851. There is a character-sketch of him in a letter to Ruskin's father:—

> "*7th December* [1851].— . . . I miss to-day, at my morning prayers, Mr. Cooke—who used to make the responses in a most serious and earnest manner. The smallest clever man I ever knew . . . full of affection, most unselfish, ready to help all the world, and full of accurate and valuable knowledge in natural history—with which he is always overflowing at wrong times, flying perpetually from one thing to another; and yet, if you ask him a plain question about something which you really want to know, you get no answer. He knows a thousand things apropos of it, but not *It*. If you would like to see some very curious and laborious sketches of the Ducal Palace, and will just send a line to the Ferns, Victoria Road, Kensington, to know when he would be at home, he would be delighted to see you, and will tell you a great deal about us. He is the most curious mixture of conceit and humility I ever met with. They have just made him an associate R.A. Now, he has as good a right to be R.A. as anybody—far better than Lee, Creswick—or Roberts; but he felt it such a high honour that it quite threw him into a fever of excitement, which I in vain endeavoured to allay by informing him it was no honour at all—unless to the Academy. But his tiny self-importance and affectionateness came out, in his telling us the next day that 'all the artists in London had been quite in a state of excitement about it (his election),' and that their sympathy was most gratifying!"

For other remarks on Venetian boats, see *Harbours of England* (Vol. XIII. p. 18).]

[1] [No. 273, "Home and the Homeless."]

[2] [Henry Le Jeune (1819–1904) gained the gold medal of the Royal Academy in 1844, and was afterwards elected an Associate.]

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—just before she "turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing"[1]—given so faithfully. Much fault might be found with the mere painting; but I will find none! for the main and moving facts are there. Give the picture time, and it will bring tears.

1190. THE EVE OF ST. AGNES. (*A. Hughes.*)

A noble picture, apparently too hastily finished, and very wrongly put into this room. It looks too blue; but remember it is entirely a night piece, admitting moonlight into the chambers; and if a piece of real moonlight were seen, instead of the picture, through the walls of the room, it would look just as strangely blue: the fault which the eye catches is chiefly that the blue glass casts a white light, and the colours in the left hand subject are confused in relation. The ivy on the tree trunk has clearly been done without a natural model, and is not creditable to the painter of the ivy in No. 578. The half-entranced, half-startled, face of the awaking Madeline is exquisite; but the lover's in both the centre and right-hand subjects very far from satisfactory. If, however, the reader knows the poem, he will be grateful for the picture; and there is promise in it of high excellence.[2]

878, 885, 1002 are three intensely faithful studies in the East, by Holman Hunt.[3] The gleam of the Dead Sea in the distance of 878 is quite marvellous, and the drawing of the Sphinx is an invaluable record. Probably the reader who has never studied natural facts will think the colouring extraordinary, as Turner's used to be thought. It is,

[1] [John xx. 14.]

[2] [A reproduction of this picture—an illustration of Keats' poem in three compartments—will be found at p. 182 of *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham*. "Hughes' 'Eve of St. Agnes,'" wrote Rossetti, "will make his fortune, I feel sure."]

[3] [873. "View from the Mount of Offence, looking toward the Dead Sea and the Mountains of Moab: Morning." 885. "Jerusalem by Moonlight: looking over the site of the Temple to the Mount of Olives." 1002. "The Sphinx, Gizeh, looking towards the pyramids of Sakhara."]

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nevertheless, precisely true—touch for touch. I have given the reasons of its apparent want of truth in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iii. § 8 *et seq.*[1]

I must here close my *Notes* on the present exhibition, though I know that I have missed count of many good pictures; but I am somewhat tired with previous work, and cannot meet the large range of excellence in the Academy this year with correlative exertion. One or two works, also, I have to note in other exhibitions.

[1] [In this edition, Vol. VI. pp. 54 *seq.* The completion of the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters* was doubtless the "previous work" here referred to.]

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# SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS[1]

THE pictures in this pleasant room are so easily distinguishable and accessible, that I think it will be better to refer to them in the order of their importance (or that which seems to me such), than in the regular succession of the catalogue.

## 1. No. 134.

[A Frank encampment in the desert of Mount Sinai, 1842—the convent of St. Catherine in the distance. The picture comprises portraits of an English nobleman and his suite; Mahmoud, the Dragoman, etc.; Hussein, Scheikh of Gebel Tor, etc.—*J. F. Lewis.*]

If this picture is painted in firm colours, and will stand against time; and if it gets into good hands, and is safely kept, it will one day be among things which men will come to England from far away to see, and will go back to their homes saying, "I have seen it," as people come

[1] [The Society of Painters in Water-Colours, often referred to as the "Old" Water-Colour Society, was founded in 1805; its first exhibitions were held at No. 20 Lower Brook Street. After various moves, it settled in 1809 at Spring Gardens. In 1813 it was reconstituted as "The Oil and Water-Colour Society." In 1821 the Society was again reconstructed as a Water-Colour Society only, and it established itself in Pall Mall, East. In the *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, Ruskin gives a pleasant description of the exhibitions held there in his earlier days (p. 389 of this volume, and compare *The Art of England*, § 159). Ruskin was elected an honorary member in 1873, and "was very proud of the honour. He said at the time to a visitor—'Nothing ever pleased me more. I have always been abusing the artists, and now they have complimented me. It's very nice to think they give me credit for knowing something about art'" (W. G. Collingwood's Prefatory Notes to the Ruskin Exhibition held at the Society's Gallery in 1901, p. ix.). Ruskin occasionally showed drawings in the Society's rooms. In 1881 the Society was permitted to make use of the name and style of "The Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours." The gallery was extended and rebuilt in 1875.]



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back now from Venice, saying they have seen Titian's "Peter Martyr";[1] or from Milan, saying they have seen the "Sposalizio." I have no hesitation in ranking it among the most *wonderful* pictures in the world; nor do I believe that, since the death of Paul Veronese, anything has been painted comparable to it in its own way.

I rank it with Veronese's work, because it is painted on the same principles of colour and design; and shows just as much ease of hand, though the execution is modified by the smallness of scale, and by the resolution to obtain certain effects of light which the Venetian would not have cared for: but if this picture were magnified so as to show the figures the size of life, it would be felt at once that no work but Veronese's could stand against it for a moment; and I only regret that its admirableness of detail should be concentrated so as to become, to most people, all but invisible. If the reader will take a magnifying glass to it, and examine it touch by touch, he will find that, literally, any four square inches of it contain as much as an ordinary water-colour drawing; nay, he will, perhaps, become aware of refinements in its handling which escape the naked eye altogether. Let him examine, for instance, with a good lens, the eyes of the camels, and he will find there is as much painting beneath their drooping fringes as would, with most painters, be thought enough for the whole head; or let him look at the cane-work of the back of the chair on the right, and he will find as many touches in one of its meshes as, according to the notion of water-colour painting ordinarily, would suffice for the tracery of a Gothic window.

Yet, marvellous as this quantity of detail is, the quantity is not the chief wonder, but the *breadth*. It is amazing that there should be so much, but far more amazing that this Much should all be Right. Labour and delicacy we may find, unwearied and unsurpassable, in missal painting, and in

[1] [This picture perished by fire in the sacristy of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in 1866; see Vol. III. p. 28, and compare p. 399, below. Raphael's "Sposalizio" is in the Brera.]

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old Flemish work of the Van Eyck school. But labour thus concentrated in large purpose—detail thus united into effective mass—has not been seen until now. All minute work has been, more or less, broken work; and the most precious pictures were divisible by segments. But here, gradations which are wrought out through a thousand threads or meshes, are as broad and calm in unity as if struck with a single sweep of the hand. Look at the way the pale circle of the tent is gradated, through its woven pattern, with the effect of transparent light beneath. I have never seen anything quite comparable to it reached by art.*

Let us, however, recovering as best we may from our amazement at this toil, and this success, look for a little while at the meaning of the picture—meaning which we find indicated by the painter in the most subtle way. The hand of the principal figure droops negligently at its side, yet so as to point to an unfolded map. The letters on this map are of course reversed, as it lies open rightly for its owner, therefore upside down to the spectator; but the title of it is carefully made legible—

"MAP OF"

"SYRIA,"

"ANCIENT AND MODERN."

and the picture itself is a map of antiquity and modernism in the East—the Englishman encamped under Mount Sinai.

The reader must pardon me a momentary allusion to work of my own; for it has not been without some toil that I, also, have been lately endeavouring to trace the kind of contrast which exists between the ancient and modern temper of the human race. Mr. Lewis was wholly ignorant of my work, and I of his. In closing an inquiry into the

* Merely as a piece of technical composition, note the way in which this canopy is repeated and balanced by the matting below; hide the matting with the hand, and see how top-heavy the canopy becomes. The dead fawn, in like manner, repeats and relieves the colour-mass of the principal standing camel.

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modern feeling respecting scenery consecrated by solemn associations, I said,—

"I do not know if there be game on Sinai, but I am always expecting to hear of some one shooting over it."[1]

Some of those semi-serious people who never know earnest from jest, accused me of levity in saying this. I said it not in levity, but in stern soberness; yet certainly it was with strange surprise that I saw that this great painter had given his year's labour to develop a similar thought, and that, four months only after the sentence was written, the most notable picture on the exhibition walls of London was an accurate fulfilment of its words:—Mount Sinai, with a foreground of dead game.

Special examination of the points of various interest in this picture is, of course, impossible—it would need a separate essay. I shall only note one or two things which, under any circumstances, the reader should not miss.

Note first the labour in the sky. The whole field of it is wrought gradually out with touches no larger than the filaments of a feather. It is, in fact, an embroidered sky—Penelope's web was slight work compared to it;—such a thing, as far as I know, never painter endured to do before. The purpose of this is to get the peculiar look of heat haze, and depth of colour, with light, which there is in all skies of warm climates. It cannot be got otherwise: but, inasmuch as whatever work may be given to it, it cannot, in some respects, be got at all, the *light* of it being unapproachable, it almost grieves me to see the labour spent to obtain only an approximate result. Still in this one picture, I feel that it ought to have been done, in order that all might be as well as it could be.

Secondly, examine the rock drawing of the Sinai, exquisite alike in hue and form, and conquering, stone by stone, the difficulty which, to all landscape painters but Turner, has been hitherto unconquerable, of expressing fallen masses of débris in their endless complexity.

[1] [The reference is to *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (1856) ch. xvi. ("Of Modern Landscape") § 11 (Vol. V. p. 324).]

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If I venture to speak of a fault in this part of the work, it is only as acknowledging that human strength must always fail somewhere: Veronese is sometimes too flat—Tintoret sometimes too dark—Leonardo sometimes too hard—Turner sometimes too mysterious—Lewis sometimes too definite. Throughout this picture we may trace, here and there, a slightly *linear* violence; as, for instance, in the black outline round the lower part of the dead fawn in the foreground, which is not entirely true, and gives the work, here and there, a slight aspect of meagreness. The lines of fissure and shadow on the rocks, and round the stones of the distant Sinai, are thus a little too sharp and thin; indicating some remains of the painter's old manner of using the pencil point, as in his sketches in Spain.

The faces, however, as well as the draperies, are entirely free from this fault, and the intensity of character reached in them surpasses, I think, all the painter's former efforts. Even the more distant figures are full of portrait character of the most perfect finish. It may be useful to any reader who is himself fond of drawing, to note the subtlety of *truth* on which all depends. Take, for instance, the head of the Arab between the Sheikh and the camel, and note the dim sparkle of light in one eye, missed in the other. A common painter would have put it into both; but he would have spoiled the head, for it could not have been in both. The point of light in the right one is the reflection, on the under part of the ball, of the light from the nose, which could, of course, be seen on the sunlighted side only. The Arab, whose face is half seen behind the tassel of the housings of one of the camels, which takes the place of his beard, is another thoroughly grand piece of character. There seems much difference of opinion as to the type of head adopted for the figure of the Englishman. I think it very right;—quiet, delicate, firm, and Cœur-de-Lion-like.[1] The two dogs, like all Lewis's animals, are inimitable.

[1] [Ruskin was fond of taking Richard as a type: see, *e.g.*, Vol. V. p. 198, and devoted Letter iii. of *Fors Clavigera* to "Richard of England."]

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I have nearly exhausted terms of praise, and have none left, now, strong enough for the complexity and skill of the *composition*. The deliciousness of some of the bits of grey and pale flickering colour, and the way the innumerable lines and hues flow together, without flaw or a fallacy anywhere, complete the strange merits and marvels of this work. I trust, whatever its destination, that measures may be taken to preserve it from excess of light and from damp. Body-colour preserved (as in manuscripts) in shade, and kept dry, has stood unchanged for six hundred years; but the slightest adverse influences are to be dreaded for a work of this delicacy, when so much depends upon so little, and when every gleam of colour is precious.[1]

It will be observed that on each side of this brilliant and delicate picture is hung a drawing of excessive darkness and boldness, by David Cox.[2] This was thoroughly well judged—there is no rivalship—but a kindly and effective contrast. The two drawings of English moors (128, 140) gain in gloom and power by the opposition to the Arabian sunlight; and Lewis's finish is well set off by the impatient breadth of Cox. No. 140 is a very interesting example of this master; so also the smaller ones, 234, 240.[3]

88. HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN INSPECTING THE WOUNDED COLDSTREAM GUARDS IN THE HALL OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE. (*John Gilbert.*[4])

A very interesting and successful drawing, apparently full of good portraiture, and certainly of right expression. It

[1] [Elsewhere Ruskin refers to this drawing (with Turner's of "Hornby Castle," in the South Kensington Museum) as "unsurpassable standards of water-colour painting" (see below, p. 340).]

[2] [See below, p. 195 *n.*]

[3] [128. "Driving the Flock." 140. "Peat Gatherers, North Wales." 234. "Twilight." 240. "Wind and Rain."]

[4] [Sir John Gilbert (1817–1897) began exhibiting in the London galleries in 1836; largely occupied in black-and-white work for book illustration and illustrated journalism; elected a member of the Old Water-Colour Society, 1854, of which he became President in 1871; knighted, 1872; A.R.A., 1872; R.A., 1876; in 1893 presented a number of his pictures to the municipal galleries of London, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester.]

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is notable for its frank and firm execution; in general, artists are appalled by the presence of Majesty, and, in their earnest desire to do well, are apt to lose their power, and make their work too soft or too polished; but Mr. Gilbert has retained his presence of mind, and has given an effective rendering of a touching and memorable scene.

23. HUNTSMAN'S BOY AND BLOODHOUNDS. (*F. Tayler.*[1])

This is the best drawing Mr. Tayler has produced for some time, but best only inasmuch as it deals with a subject familiar both to him and to us, on a somewhat larger scale than usual. Indeed, as long as Mr. Tayler persists in his faith that natural form and colour are only to be represented by an ingenious imposition of slops or blots, it is quite useless to criticise his work. Beyond a certain point he cannot, by any physical possibility, advance: that point he had reached fifteen years ago, and it is not a high one.

256, 271. "AN ITINERANT." "DEVOTION."[2]

Two superb drawings by Mr. Hunt—fortunate in the features and expression of the models chosen, and, like all the master's work, consummate in execution. As a piece of artistical handling and dexterity, the woolly hair of the negro is a lesson which cannot be too long studied.

The other drawings by this master, in the room, are, of course, all good; but, perhaps, less *delightful* than usual. I miss his hawthorn blossom, mossy banks, and birds: there are two or three pounds of grapes—those in 285 ["Fruit"] particularly good; but, when not on the vine, grapes are

[1] [For a note on this painter, see below, p. 196. Ruskin was an early admirer of Tayler. In the *Poetry of Architecture* (1837) he had written (§ 5): "Observe the direction of public taste at any of our exhibitions. We see visitors at that of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours passing Tayler with anathemas, and Lewis with indifference, to remain in reverence and admiration before certain amiable white lambs and water-lilies, whose artists shall be nameless" (Vol. I. p. 7).]

[2] [No. 166 in the Prout and Hunt Exhibition: see p. 447 of this vol.]

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precisely the dullest fruit that can be painted; and I can only advise, or beg, any reader who is inclined to attend to me, never in future to buy any of Hunt's grapes. He wastes an inconceivable quantity of time on them, and this is the fault of the public, for the grapes always sell.

1, 4. STUDIES OF LAKE SCENERY.[1] (*Mr. William Turner.*[2])

The works of this painter are always tender in feeling, but the larger of these is a strained and mistaken effort; the second is very true and right.

22, 167. TWO VERY INTERESTING STUDIES OF SEA.[3] (*Mr. S. P. Jackson.*[4])

The breaking of the low waves in 167 is as true as can be; and both pictures are delicate and earnest in perception of phenomena of sea and sky. The *land* is bad, in both.

20. Another study of the same class[5] (*Mr. Naftel*[6]); not so good in execution, but well meant. It looks as if painted on the spot, and the cirri in the sky are very true; there is a pleasant sense of the evening wind whistling among the stones as the sun touches their edges with its last gleam.

[1] [1. "Loch Garry, Inverness-shire: Autumn." 4. "Loch Torridon, Ross-shire: Before Morning."]

[2] [For William Turner, generally called "of Oxford," to distinguish him from the great Turner, see Vol. III. p. 472 *n.*, and Vol. V. p. 332.]

[3] [22. "The Breakwater and Chapel Rock at Bude, North Cornwall." 167. "The Sands at Bude."]

[4] [Samuel Phillips Jackson (*b.* 1830), who began to exhibit in 1853, made a speciality of coast scenery, intermixed in later years with inland scenes from Wales and on the Thames.]

[5] [20. "Collecting Vraic, on one of the natural breakwaters thrown up by the heavy seas from the Atlantic: Guernsey." 52. "The Evening Gun at Castle Cornet, Guernsey."]

[6] [Paul Jacob Naftel (*d.* 1891), a native of the Channel Islands, became an associate of the Water-Colour Society in 1850, and full member in 1859. He was for many years a drawing-master in Guernsey.]

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The handling is, however, flat and coarse: each of these stones ought to have had nearly as much work on it as there is in the whole picture. 52 is also an earnest effort, though very faulty in the work on the water. Mr. Naftel will find, on testing his work accurately, that he has cast the shadows inconsistently on the castle, and they destroy the effect of its light.

68. A quiet and unaffected study[1] (*Mr. E. Duncan*[2]), remarkable for the absence of all meretricious character. I love colour as well as most people, but confess that a little less cobalt and vermilion would better most of the pictures on the walls of this room.

90. VIEW IN GLENCOE. (*Mr. Rosenberg.*[3])

This is one of the truest pieces of mountain study in the room—evidently wholly from Nature, and though feeble in execution, satisfactory in general effect. But Mr. Rosenberg may depend upon it, mountains are quite as delicate as fruit, and he must take not less pains with them.

112, 165. STUDIES FROM NATURE.[4] (*Mr. G. Fripp*, and *Mr. A. Glennie.*)

Very good in their way; yet rather things to be kept in the artists' folios, for their own use, than to be exhibited.

[1] [68. "Spithead, with part of the Baltic Fleet, from Ryde Sands."]

[2] [Edward Duncan (1803–1882) was a constant exhibitor from 1830 onwards. Some of his marine views have been published. For other references to him see below, p. 198, and Appendix v., p. 474.]

[3] [William F. Rosenberg (*d.* 1869) began to exhibit in 1848. "His name curiously foreshadowed a change that subsequently took place in his line of art. Beginning with flowers (and fruit), he ended with mountains." The drawing noticed above was his first mountain study (*History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, ii. 301).]

[4] [112. "Part of the Ruins of Corfe Castle: the Artisans' Tower." For Mr. Fripp, see below, p. 125. 165. "View in the Forum of Rome from the School of Xanthus; done on the spot."]



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168. SUNRISE ON THE JUNGFRAU, FROM THE WENGERN ALP. (*Mr. W. Collingwood.*[1])

Striking in effect, and an attractive picture, but sadly wanting in accuracy of detail. If the artist would draw the mountain carefully, and then work out this same effect, with rock substance beneath it, he might produce a valuable drawing. And the effect itself, simple as it is, would have been twice as good if the artist had not indulged himself with a bright yellow light on his cow, and spots of pure white and yellow about the roots of his pines, while the first rays of dawn are still a mile or two above them, and cannot get down to them for an hour and a half yet, at the very least.

The picture, as it is, cannot be considered a study from Nature; and it forms a connecting link between the works above noticed, in which the artist's *intention*, at least, is to be true, and those forming the larger portion of the exhibition, in which the intention is to be pretty, or clever. These, though there is much dexterity in some of them, need not separately be noticed, as they involve little of interest, except variations in touch, or expedients for getting opposition in blue and orange, yellow and purple, according to the formulæ of colour-science. On the whole, the exhibition is greatly above the average; and the public seem to have discerned this, for the little bits of blue which the artists like to see completing their harmonies of colour, are now wanting to very few of the pictures. I am heartily glad to see this; for of all modes of spending money in self indulgence, none are perhaps so collaterally kind as the encouragement of an art so healthy and pleasurable as Water-colour Painting.

[1] [William Collingwood, born at Greenwich, April 23, 1819, studied under his cousin W. Collingwood Smith and his father's friend J. D. Harding, joined the New Water-Colour Society in 1845, and the Old Society (now R.W.S.) in 1855 as a painter of "interiors." The notice by Ruskin of his experiment in Alpine landscape induced him to devote himself almost entirely to Swiss subjects, which he exhibited at the R.W.S. down to his death at Bristol on June 25, 1903.]

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I have no space left for detailed notice of the other exhibitions, but cannot pass unnamed the very remarkable picture in the rooms of the Society of British Artists,[1] No. 110, "Eavesdroppers," by J. Campbell, one of the most earnest pieces of domestic homely truth I have ever seen: nor, in the French Exhibition in Pall Mall, the series of cottage studies, by Edouard Frère,[2] 150 to 155,[3] quite unequalled, it seems to me, in sincerity and truth of conception, though somewhat dimly painted. (Compare note on pictures in Academy, No. 160, p. 55.) I ought, perhaps, to have said, truth of *sight*, rather than truth of conception; for I have been informed that this artist, rambling from cottage to cottage, and telling the peasantry "never to mind him," watches and seizes some real moment of action in the undisturbed family; recording, also, with historical fidelity, the position of every article of domestic furniture, and with such scrupulousness, that being on one occasion requested to enrich a somewhat blank piece of background by the addition of some piece of delf or pewter

[1] [For a note on this Society, see below, p. 139; and for the French Exhibition, p. 141.]

[2] [Pierre Edouard Frère (1819–1886), pupil of Paul Delaroche, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, 1855. Ruskin was "the first to recognise publicly in England" the "gentle power" of this French painter (see letter to the *Daily Telegraph* of October 7, 1870, reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. ii. p. 34, and in a later volume of this edition). In subsequent *Notes*, Ruskin praises this painter in similar manner (see pp. 142, 174, 251, and compare pp. 346, 347). In the *Cestus of Aglaia* (1865) he classes the domestic painting of Frère with Richter's in Germany and Hook's in England (§ 2). A description of one of Frère's "exquisite little painted poems" is given in *Aratra Pentelici* (§§ 111, 113); and in *The Art of England* his pictures of children are referred to as "of quite immortal beauty" (Lecture iv., § 108). In Ruskin's diary of 1859 there is an entry which is of interest in this connexion:—

> "Calais.—Before dinner, just under the ramparts, a little girl of about five years old was sitting outside her cottage door munching a slice of very nice white bread and butter. She had put a little deal stool in front of her, covered with buttercups and red daisies, and was reading a little book with great earnestness. I asked her what she was reading. She held up her book. It was a catechism with a generally moral tendency apparently; but the part she was at related to the treatment of thieves, by putting them in prison. She seemed highly interested, but I could not get her to tell me why. She made a perfect Frère with her flowers and book. I asked her where she got the flowers. 'From the ramparts.' 'What are you doing with them?' 'Je m'amuse.'"]

[3] 150: "The Evening Meal." 151: "The Breakfast." 152: "The Toilette." 153: "The Young Artist." 154: "Cold Morning." 155: "Return from Market."

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which had caught the purchaser's eye in another study—"No," he replied, "I cannot do that: it was in another cottage."

I consider these pictures, therefore, as examples of true Historical Painting,[1] and of very high value. It is quite impossible to say what importance may, in some future day, attach to such records of the French peasant life of the 19th century.[2]

[1] [On this subject, see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting* (Vol. XII. pp. 151–154).]

[2] [Here eds. 1 and 2 ended. The following "Postscript" appeared in eds. 3, 4, 5, and 6.]

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W. L. Windus

Allen & Co. Sc.

**Burd Helen**

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# POSTSCRIPT

GENERALLY speaking, the arrangement of the pictures in the Academy this year is better than usual; but the errors which are usually notable in various parts of the rooms seem to have been all concentrated in the one crying error of putting No. 122 nearly out of sight. I have a special dislike to pictures of a slate-grey colour, as well as of girls in dresses of pages; for which cause, in glancing round the room, I passed this "Burd Helen" by,[1] as one of the quaint

[1] [For a further reference by Ruskin to this picture, see below, pp. 233, 330, 331. It was, he said, one of the great Pre-Raphaelite pictures which "will hold their own with the most noble pictures of all time." The subject of the picture was taken from the Scottish Border ballad (another version of "Childe Waters") of the girl who ran by the side of her faithless lover while he rode, and who swam the Clyde, rather than that he should escape:—

"Lord John he rode, Burd Helen ran,
The live-lang summer's day,
Until they cam' to Clyde's Water,
Was filled frae bank to brae.

'See'st thou yon water, Helen,' quoth he,
'That flows frae bank to brim?'
'I trust to God, Lord John,' she said,
'You ne'er will see me swim.'"

See Aytoun's *Ballads of Scotland*, i. 239, where a slightly different version of it is given: it may also be found in *Percy's Reliques* (vol. iii. p. 59), under the title of "Childe Waters." Other versions of this ballad, and other ballads of the same name, and probably origin, may be found in Jameson's collection, vol. i. p. 117, vol. ii. p. 376, in Buchan's *Ancient Ballads of the North*, ii. 29 (1879 ed.), and in *Four Books of Scottish Ballads*, Edin., 1868, Bk. ii. p. 21, where it is well noted that "Burd Helen" corresponds to the "Proud Elise" of northern minstrels, "La Prude Dame Elise" of the French, and the "Gentle Lady Elise" of the English—(Burd, Prud, Preux). It is also possible that it is a corruption of Burdalayn, or Burdalane, meaning an only child, a maiden, etc. The painter was William Lindsay Windus, formerly a Liverpool artist, and a member of the Academy of that city. D. G. Rossetti was immensely struck by the picture. "The finest thing of all" in the Academy, he wrote. He "forced Ruskin to go with him to see it *instanter*, because he had not noticed it in his pamphlet, and extorted the promise of a postscript on its behalf" (*Letters to William Allingham*, pp. 187, 188). "I assure you," wrote Mr. Windus to Rossetti, "that you and Mr. Ruskin were the two persons in the world whose approbation I



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efforts of some younger member of the rising school, neither deserving praise nor warranting discouragement. Further examination of it leads me to class it as the second picture of the year; its aim being higher, and its reserved strength greater, than those of any other work except the "Autumn Leaves." Its whiteness of colour results from the endeavour to give the cold grey of the northern fall of day, when the wind is bleak, and the clouds gathering for storm, their distant cumuli, heavy with rain, hanging on the rises of the moorland. I cannot see, at the distance of the picture from the eye, how far the painting of the pebbles and heath has been carried; but I see just enough of the figures to make me sure that the work is thoughtful and intense in the highest degree. The pressure of the girl's hand on her side; her wild, firm, desolate look at the stream—she not raising her eyes as she makes her appeal, for fear of the greater mercilessness in the human look than in the glaze of the gliding water—the just choice of the type of the rider's cruel face, and of the scene itself—so terrible in haggardness of rattling stones and ragged heath,—are all marks of the action of the very grandest imaginative power, shortened only of hold upon our feelings because dealing with a subject too fearful to be for a moment believed true. There are one or two minor faults in it; a horse nearly always stoops its head as it approaches the edge of a ford, and the erectness of its bearing in the picture takes away the look of truth in the entire incident, more than one could have supposed possible. I have some doubt also,

most ardently wished and scarcely dared to hope for, and that I felt the most inexpressible delight when the extract from your letter was read to me, being at the time in a wretched state of despondency" (*Ruskin, Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelitism*, p. 138). Mr. Windus contributed to the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition in 1857; his picture, "Too Late," is noticed in the *Notes* of 1859 (p. 233). "Suddenly, owing, it is said, to a great sorrow, he left off painting, and nothing was seen of his work till, in 1896, the New English Art Club startled the picture-loving public, who had thought Windus dead, by showing three unfinished works of his on their walls" (P. H. Bate, *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters*, p. 82). See also *Magazine of Art* for December 1899, where an account of the painter's life and work is given. The picture of "Burd Helen" was purchased by Mr. Miller, of Liverpool; at his sale, two years later, it fetched 200 guineas; in 1892 it appeared again in the sale-rooms and fetched a high price: see Harry Quilter's *Preferences in Art*, p. 72.]

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whether, unless the spectator were himself supposed to be wading the ford, so as to bring the eye almost on a level with the water surface, the reflection of the sky could so entirely prevent the appearance of the pebbles through the water. They are rightly shown through the dark reflection at the horse's foot, and rightly effaced, in a great degree, by that of the sky; but I think they should not have been entirely so. These are, however, quite minor defects, and I merely name them lest they should be brought forward by adverse critics as if they were serious ones.

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III

# NOTES

ON SOME OF

# THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF THE

# ROYAL ACADEMY

AND THE

# SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS,

ETC.

No. III.—1857.

By JOHN RUSKIN, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "MODERN PAINTERS," "STONES OF VENICE," "SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE," ETC., ETC.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 65, CORNHILL.
1857.

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[*Bibliographical Note.*—Of the third number of *Academy Notes* there were two editions:—

*First Edition* (1857).—The title-page was as shown on the preceding page. An octavo pamphlet of 60 pages. Half-title with the words "(*Price One Shilling*)" below, and with imprint on the reverse—"London: Printed by Spottiswoode & Co. New Street Square," pp. 1, 2; title-page (with blank reverse), pp. 3, 4; text, pp. 5–60, the imprint being repeated at the foot of p. 60. No headlines, the pages being numbered centrally. Inserted at the end are 16 pages of advertisements of books published by Smith, Elder & Co. Issued on May 16 in green paper wrappers, with the title-page (enclosed in a plain double-ruled frame) on the front; the words "Price One Shilling" being added below the rule at the foot. On p. 4 of the cover are advertisements of "Mr. Ruskin's Works on Art."

*Second Edition* (1857).—The words "Second Edition" were added to the title-page and wrapper, and the words "(*Price One Shilling*)" removed from the half-title; otherwise an exact reprint of the First.

*Reprinted* in 1902 in *Ruskin on Pictures*, vol. ii. pp. 75–121.

*Reviewed* in the *Economist*, June 13, 1857 (see below, p. 147) and the *Art Journal*, June 1857, N.S., vol. 3, p. 200.]

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# EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

As year by year, in the Royal Academy, the principles established by the Pre-Raphaelites are more frankly accepted, and more patiently put in practice, I observe that, notwithstanding all the substantial advantage derived from them, two results must necessarily follow, involving some disappointment to the public and great mortification to the artist. I see that we shall have more wayside nooks, corners of green fields, pools of watercress streams, and the like, than can, in the aggregate, contribute much to the amusement of the restless and over-excited crowd of London spectators; and I see also that there will be so high an average of perseverance and care brought to bear on every subject, that both will pass unnoticed unless recommended by more brilliant qualities; and painters who flattered themselves that the devotion of a year's honest labour could not but make their pictures conspicuous, and their names illustrious, will find, with bitter disappointment, that patience and sincerity are no longer distinctive, and that industry will soon be less notable than sloth.

Respecting the approach of these inevitable calamities, it is only to be answered, to the complaint of the public, that we ought no more to weary of green lanes in Trafalgar Square[1] than we do in Devonshire or Kent; and, to the disappointment of the artist, that although distinction cannot be, and should not be, conferred by the practice of any

[1] [The reader will remember that the Royal Academy of Arts was at this time housed in a portion of the present National Gallery: see above, p. 21 *n.* Its exhibitions were transferred to Burlington House in 1869.]



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particular style, honesty of aim will always make his labour useful and his life happy. Distinction, if it is justly won, can of course be won only by superior intellect; a change in the methods or objects of a school does not raise the capacities of the scholars to one level, nor render it more possible than it has been hitherto to be illustrious in large companies. But it ought to be a sufficient reward for much painstaking, if the art we practise guides us into continually greater sense of natural beauty, though that beauty may be manifested to others as well as to us; and enables us to gain an honourable livelihood, though one wholly independent of laurel crowns.

The steady advance of just principles of painting is, however, strangely complicated in the present Exhibition with examples of error or of backsliding. The Pre-Raphaelite cause has been doubly betrayed by the mistimed deliberation of one of its leaders and the inefficient haste of another; and we have to regret at once that the pictures of Holman Hunt were too late for the Exhibition, and that those of Everett Millais were in time for it.

We will, as before, glance round the rooms in the order of the catalogue, sometimes breaking the line to go in quest of such pictures as it may be desirable to compare at once with that under consideration.

8. Au Sixième. (*J. C. Horsley, A.*)

A sweet sketch; we can hardly, in the present stage of general completion, call it more; and I regret this, for the subject is one which would have borne exquisite finish. The *innocent* life of the French grisette, if we may suppose the "Rigolette" of Eugène Sue[1] to be a type of a large class, is one of the pleasantest to contemplate among all the conditions of labour which are dependent on modern

[1] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 372 *n.*), where Ruskin makes some remarks on the character of Rigolette in the *Mystères de Paris*, and notices her love of flowers.]

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European luxury. Surely, by the way, there should have been flowers at her window, as well as that piece of extravagance on the table, into which she has been beguiled at the Marché aux Fleurs. The outlook of the window also, being "au sixième," might have been made very interesting; views over Parisian roofs are nearly always so.

14. NARCISSUS. (*W. E. Frost, A.*)

The young Dryad on the right gives us an interesting example of ideal grace of action in "finding" a daffodil. The bough which she raises with her pretty arm has evidently been so extremely in her way, that the only wonder is how, under the oppressive circumstances, she ever found the daffodil at all. Dryads and Naiads are, I suppose, susceptible of shadows only from themselves; as I see the trees cast none upon them. Mr. Frost knows best; but if it be so, Dryads and Naiads are bad models, and mortal ladies, liable to chiaroscuro, would make better pictures.

28. A CRAB AND LOBSTER SHORE. (*E. W. Cooke, A.*)

This very careful study just misses being quite right and quite beautiful for want of a very slight degree of greater watchfulness—*not* greater labour. Merely by way of an instance of the kind of completion wanted, note the shadow of the man most to the right, leaning on the boat. It is a dark-brown shadow on a violet boat; in the probability of which, at that distance, I do not believe, but let that pass. This dark-brown shadow falls not only on the violet-coloured wood, but on a stripe of red paint and on some seams of paler colour. But it crosses all of them, remaining equally dark-brown. Now, a shadow which was rich brown on violet, would be orange-scarlet on crimson, and deep golden-grey on white; and all these changes ought to have been shown in that shadow by separate touches of pure colour. It is an infinitely more important matter that

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these transitions of hue should be given, than that mere force of chiaroscuro should be reached. A similar though less demonstrable monotony in hue causes all the careful work on the shore to look coarse. Each pebble is painted with two or three touches of some unvaried colour—usually about two for its bright and one for its dark side; whereas each side would, in Nature, have been infinitely varied with hues either broken into texture or melting into gradation. No touch of colour is or ever can be right, however small, if it be monotonous; and almost the first point of art with a great workman is getting the colour to palpitate within the touches, mingling it with endless cunning, and never leaving one spot bare, or one hue definable.

39. A Syrian Sheikh, Egypt. (*J. F. Lewis.*)

When Mr. Lewis sends a picture to the Academy, it ought not to be one which even his truest admirers might easily pass without noticing. I have seen many of his sketches, executed in about three or four hours, which were more interesting than this highly-wrought painting, and I am quite sure that he could paint a noble picture, rich in composition, and powerful in rendering of human character, in a couple of months, if he did not wilfully set himself subjects involving minuteness as a chief part of their expression. He has much of the power of Veronese and Tintoret; and yet he takes Van Eyck for his model. Why not, if only by way of practice, paint two bold pictures in the beginning of the year, one for the Water-Colour Society and one for the Academy, and then devote the long days to whatever finishing procedure he chose on his pet pictures? —these last coming forth, in due or undue time, as it might be; but two vigorous works being, without fail, produced annually. Many reasons occur to me which might be urged in further recommendation of such a plan; one or two I will state presently, with reference to Mr. Lewis's drawing in the Water-Colour Exhibition.

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41. INTERIOR OF DUOMO, MILAN. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*)

It must be, I think, nearly ten years, if not more, since Mr. Roberts painted so careful a picture. It is entirely true to the scene, and unusually forcible and solemn in the effect of the painted window. But why does Mr. Roberts *always* draw painted windows lighter at the top than the bottom? I have often seen them lighter at the bottom than the top; certainly I never saw them, as in No. 418,[1] darker at the bottom than the stone of their jambs; the whole breadth of casement telling as a gloom instead of a light. The tapestry about the pillars in this Milan is thoroughly painted, and the whole picture very enjoyable, as an expression of cathedral splendour, though not of cathedral solemnity.

50. NEWS FROM HOME.[2] (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

We will pass this for the present; merely asking, as we pass, whether Mr. Millais supposes this to be the generally bright aspect of a Highlander on a campaign? or whether he imagines that Highlanders at the Crimea had dress portmanteaus as well as knapsacks, and always put on new uniforms to read letters from home in?

78. PETER THE GREAT.[3] (*D. Maclise, R.A.*)

This is a less exaggerated and more conscientious work than Mr. Maclise has yet produced. But I hope his conscience will become keener yet; for it is difficult to understand how a painter who goes through so much hard work can persist in the idea that there is no indistinctness in

[1] ["Interior of the Church of St. Gommaire, at Lierre, in Brabant."]
[2] [This picture, of a Highlander sitting in a trench during the Crimean War, reading a letter, is now in America.]
[3] ["Peter the Great, Czar of Muscovy, working as a shipwright, with his 'rough retinue,' in the dockyard at Deptford, during the winter of 1697–1698, is visited by William the Third."]

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Nature, or that there ought to be none. I have heard it said that Mr. Maclise is singularly far-sighted, and draws more decisively than other painters, in the belief that he sees more clearly. But though his sight had the range of the eagle's and clearness of the lynx's; though it were as manifold as a dragon-fly's and as manageable as a chamæleon's, there is a limit to his sight, as to all our sights. He may perhaps be able to see that in Mr. Inchbold's "Jungfrau" (at the top of the room, No. 360) the foreground is covered with gentians and Alpine roses; but he cannot count the leaves of the roses, nor the filaments of the moss which embroiders the ground with gold between the gentians' blue. And, as far as in his pictures I am able to compare his power of sight with that of other people, he appears to see, not more, but a great deal less, than the world in general. When we commonplace people look from Deptford to the other side of the Thames, we do not see houses like these behind Peter the Great, with blank square patches of grey for their doors and windows. That appearance is precisely the one presented to us by the models of houses which children buy to give their dolls dinner in. But when we look at real houses across the Thames, we see panes in the windows (or rags in them, as the case may be); bricks in the walls (or holes in them); planks in the doors; tiles on the roofs; incidents of all kinds, in form and colour, infinitely rich and abundant: more or less confused, indeed; but this confusion is not with us, the unfortunate plurality, peculiar to distant objects. All natural objects are confused to us, however near, however distant, because all are infinite. Nay, I cannot but think that if even Mr. Maclise looks at a fly upon a wall ten yards from him, he may see clearly that it is a fly, but he will not be able to count the meshes in its wings; and if he looks fairly, and without any previous prejudice, at a girl's hair, however close to him, and however carefully curled, he will find that it verily does not look like a piece of wood carved into scrolls, and French-polished afterwards,

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as the curls of these observant young English ladies do. The stars, I think, are adverse at present to the painting of hair, and all the immortality that our pretty ladies can hope for in that respect must be Berenice's or Belinda's;[1] for if Mr. Maclise thinks that hair is made of brown wood, the Pre-Raphaelites are all under the strongest conviction that it is made of red sand, and pass great part of their time in endeavours to enter Michael Scott's service, and make, if not ropes, at least locks, out of sea sand.[2] It is not often that I plead for any imitation of the work of bygone days; but, very seriously, I think no pupil should be allowed to pass the examination ordeal of our schools of painting until he had copied, in a satisfactory manner, a lock of hair by Correggio. Once let him do that with any tolerable success, and he would know to the end of his life both what the word "painting" meant, and with what flowing light and golden honour the Maker of the human form has crowned its power and veiled its tenderness.

### 103. Sacred Song. (*S. A. Hart, R.A.*[3])

This is a good study—better in many respects than Mr. Hart's larger pictures; but these sacred singers are not Dryads, are they? or has Mr. Hart a special theory concerning shadows,—to wit, that fingers may cast them on paper, but leaves cannot cast them on foreheads?

[1] [See *The Rape of the Lock* (canto v.), where Pope converts to the purloined lock of his own heroine the legend of the apotheosis of the hair which Berenice had suspended in the temple of the war-god, as a vow to secure the safe return and victory of her husband, Ptolemy III. :—

"A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair."]

[2] [Among the exploits attributed to Michael Scott, the wizard, was "taming an indefatigable demon by employing him in the hopeless and endless task of making ropes out of sea sand."—Sir Walter Scott's Notes to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*]

[3] [Solomon Alexander Hart (1806–1881) was elected A.R.A. in 1836, R.A. in 1840. He was Professor of Painting at the Academy 1854–1863, and afterwards Librarian. One of his earlier pictures is in the Tate Gallery (No. 424).]



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107. TITIAN PREPARING FOR HIS FIRST ESSAY IN COLOURING. (*W. Dyce, R.A.*)

Well done! Mr. Dyce, and many times well done! though it is of little use for any of us to say so to you; for when a man has gone through such a piece of work as this he knows he is right, and knows it so calmly that it does not matter much to him whether people see it or not. This is a notable picture in several ways, being, in the first place, the only one quite up to the high-water mark of Pre-Raphaelitism in the exhibition this year: for, although Mr. Carrick's (No. 185) is in several respects better painted, there are no difficulties of form and distance presented by his subject; while Mr. Dyce has encountered all discoverable difficulties at once, and chosen a subject involving an amount of toil only endurable by the boundless love and patience which are the first among the Pre-Raphaelite characteristics.

In the second place, this is the first picture yet produced by the school in which the work has been at all affected by a sculpturesque sense of grace in form. Hitherto, every master who has ranked himself on this side, has been a colourist, and his subject has been chosen and treated with chief reference to colour, not intentionally, but because a colourist can do no otherwise; seeing, in all that he has to show, effects of light and hue first, and form secondarily. I cannot tell how far Mr. Dyce is capable of becoming a colourist, but he is not one yet; and although this deficiency is grievously hurtful to his work in many respects, in one it has advantaged it: he has rendered more of the finished grace and lovely composition of line in that oak foliage than has yet been seen in oak. If he could have coloured it better, he would have softened its edges, and carried the eye more to gleams of green and shades of purple, slightly losing the lines of leaf and branch; for art always loses something, or else we should not know it from reality, and it is interesting to see, for the first time, in

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the annals of the rising school, this inevitable loss taking place in colour instead of form, and the landscape painted with a sculptor's precision and a sculptor's love of grace.

Though, however, we may contentedly part with a little green and purple in oak leaves for the sake of exquisiteness in delineation, we cannot part so lightly with the blood of Titian: no boy could ever have coloured a Madonna's face who had so little colour in his own. And there was not the least need for this failure; because, though I do not think Mr. Dyce will ever himself colour like a Venetian, I see, by the way he has painted the flowers and the boy's dress, that he has quite as much eye for colour as ever Leonardo had; and he may paint flesh quite as well as Leonardo, if he likes.

Only one cavil more. Whatever Ridolfi may say[1] (I have not had time to look), Titian's actual first attempts must have been of a very different kind, and in another order of landscape. It was not in the green, delicate-leaved twilight of a lowland garden, nor among its sweet measurements of level grass, that the boy received his first impressions of colour, but among the strong trunks and rugged ground of the forests of Cadore, and in the dawns beyond its desolate mountains, when the massy clouds stood quiet between the burning and the blue. Nor would it have been a statue such as this which first made him dream of the Madonna; but rather some fresco of a wayside chapel, where she stood with her hands folded, and the moon under her feet, and the companies of heaven around her, crown above crown, circlet beyond circlet—gleaming golden in the arched shade.

Conceding, however, Mr. Dyce's theory of the place, and accepting, with perhaps a little further demur, the graceful and undisturbed dress of the boy for such as the young

[1] ["Ridolfi states that Titian, when a little boy, gave the earliest indication of his future eminence as a colourist by drawing a Madonna, which he coloured with the juice of flowers."—Note to the picture in the *Academy Catalogue*. The reference is to the life of Titian in Carlo Ridolfi's *Le Maraviglie dell' Arte:* "ancor piccioletto col solo impulso della natura, fece co' sughi di fiori, entro ad un capitello sopra ad una strada della sua patria, la figure della Vergine."]

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Titian was likely to have worn to work in (particularly if the work began with flower-hunting), we may proceed to enjoy the picture heartily in all other respects—the expression of the boy being excellent, and the flowers, grass, leafage, and dress, down to the minutest fold of the purple lining of the cap, painted so that no one need ever hope to do much better.

It will take about an hour to see this picture properly.

185. THOUGHTS OF THE FUTURE. (*R. Carrick.*)

Quite faultless, as far as I can see; and one of the best, if not absolutely the best, examples of *balanced* completion which the school has produced. It is intensely difficult to put such finish into the stripes of pillow and pattern of counterpane, and yet not to let one thread become falsely conspicuous.

It is not, of course, a work involving high powers of invention, and therefore it does not yet place its painter in the highest rank of artists; but as far as it reaches it is right: and I say little of it, only because the subject is simple and the success absolute. It is a picture of which explanation is needless, and criticism impossible.

186. THE MOUNTAIN PATH. (*J. T. Linnell.*[1])

Singularly luminous and full of air. Mr. Linnell seems to be making the most rapid advances, and has good cause to be happy in the general appreciation of his work; for I notice that almost every person who looks at this picture enjoys or praises it.

188. THE YOUNG BROTHER. (*W. Mulready, R.A.*[2])

Without exception, the least interesting piece of good painting I have ever seen in my life. I call it a "piece of

[1] [Son of J. Linnell.]

[2] [For Ruskin's other references to Mulready (1786–1863) see Vol. IV. p. 336 and *n.* The picture noticed above was painted for the gallery of pictures presented

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painting," not a "picture," because the artist's mind has been evidently fixed throughout on his modes of work, not on his subject—if subject it can be called. Is it not sorrowful to see all this labour and artistical knowledge appointed, by a command issued from the grave, to paint—and employed for a couple of years in painting—for the perpetual possession and contemplation of the English people, the ill-laced bodice of an untidy girl? Yet the picture will be a valuable one; perhaps the most forcible illustration ever given of the frivolous application of great powers. For this is not, observe, the commonplace littleness of an inferior mind, nor commonplace wantonness of a great one. We have had examples enough of mean subjects chosen by the trifling, and slight subjects chosen by the feeble: nor is it a new thing to see great intellects overthrown by impetuosity, or wasted in indolence; stumbling and lost among the dark mountains, or lying helpless by the wayside, listless or desolate. All this we have seen often; but never, I think, till now, patience disappointed of her hope, and conscientiousness mistaken in her aim; labour beguiled of her reward, and discretion warped in her choice. We have not known until now that the greatest gifts might be wasted by prudence, and the greatest errors committed by precision.

For it is quite curious how, throughout this composition, the artist seems to have aimed at showing the uselessness of all kinds of good. There is an exquisite richness of decoration in the pattern of the yellow dress, yet the picture is none the richer for it; an exquisite play of colour in the flesh, yet the girl is none the fairer for it: her dress is loose, without grace; and her beauty hidden, without decency. The colour of the whole is pure, but it does not refresh; its arrangement subtle, but it does not entertain: the child laughs without gaiety; and the youth reclines without repose.

to the nation by Mr. Vernon, in pursuance of his will. It has now been removed from the National Gallery to Dublin. It depicts a boy in arms crouching on his sister's neck, to escape the fingers of his brother, who playfully offers to pinch his ear.]

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We may be sure, however—which is some comfort—that failure of this total kind *cannot* take place unless there is somewhere a wilful departure from truth; for truth, however ill-chosen, is never *wholly* uninteresting. For instance, here, the sense of country life is destroyed by the false forms of the trees, which are only green horizontal flakes of colour, not foliage; and the dead blue dress of the youth, though it seems at first well painted, is shaded either with pure dark blue, dirty green, or violet, wholly at random, and of course, therefore, with destruction of brilliancy as well as of relief; while the folds of the girl's gown, though they at first look well drawn, are mere angular masses, without either flow or fall.

160. A Signal on the Horizon. (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

It seems to me that this is the sweetest and most pathetic picture of an English boy that has been painted in modern times; and as for the thought, and choice of scene, and rendering of expression throughout the picture, they are all so true, so touching, and so lovely, that I do not choose to speak many words about them, lest I should do the reader harm instead of good by some discordant expression: it would need a little finished idyl of Tennyson to express them lightly. But when you have made out all this design at your leisure, go at once to the "Ship Boy's Letter" (545); for the whole heart of rural England is in that, as of sailor England in the other. Take care to read the direction of the envelope on the ground with the Dover postmark—

"William Dibble . . . Ongar Hatch, Surrey;"

and what is legible of the beginning of the letter—

"Off Cape town.
"My dear Father and Mother . . . thank God. . . dear sister."

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188. At Berncastel on the Moselle. (*G. C. Stanfield.*[1])

There are more signs of present progress and future power in this painting than in any I have yet seen by the younger Stanfield; it looks like an attentively rendered portrait of the place. The hilly ground in the distance is peculiarly well drawn (and was peculiarly difficult to draw); and the shadow of the cross on the ground is followed with care among the stones, instead of being laid in with random dashes to show cleverness of touch. The place was worth drawing too. That must be an interesting example of cross, with the sculptured Madonna at the foot of it. But Mr. Stanfield must either draw his figures better or worse; he must either make them agreeable, or leave them slight. The oxen and their driver on the left, and the figure with the basket, sitting at the foot of the cross, are precisely types of the worst kind of figure which it is possible to introduce in landscape—definitely ill-drawn, and pertinaciously repulsive.

[1] [George Clarkson Stanfield, son of William Clarkson Stanfield, was born in 1828, and died in 1878. Favourable references to earlier works by the painter are made in the following letter from Ruskin to the elder Stanfield :—

"Herne Hill, Dulwich.
"18 *April*, 1853.

"Dear Mr. Stanfield,—My friend Mr. McCracken is very anxious to know if any of the pictures in this next Exhibition were intended for him? I presume not, but thought you would pardon my troubling you by the inquiry, more especially as I wished also to congratulate you on the great progress made by your son in his campaign in Italy. It seems to me quite a campaign on Marengo, and I am sure you must be very proud of him. I felt inclined to quarrel with him in defence of the honour of Mont Blanc, but he has certainly painted it on the spot, or he would not have made it look so low. It is a good fault—most people exaggerating it.

"Believe me, always faithfully yours,
"J. Ruskin."

For McCracken, see Vol. IV. p. 38 *n.*, Vol. XII. p. xlvii. The pictures referred to in this letter do not seem to have been exhibited. For Ruskin's description of the Alps seen from Marengo, see his poem in Vol. II. p. 232.]

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201. A Swiss Meadow in June. (*H. Moore.*[1])

I cannot judge of this study, it gives me too much pleasure; but it seems to me *very* perfect in general harmony of light, and in the sweet motion of the clouds along the horizon. People are beginning, I see, to feel Switzerland truly at last; and how more may sometimes be done by a single blue mound of pines, like that on the right of this field, than by piled pyramids of rock and snow.

204. Port na Spania, near the Giant's Causeway, Co. Antrim. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

I am very glad to see Mr. Stanfield's work in this exhibition on a little smaller scale than of late years, and proportionally more careful. This is a most interesting picture, and quite notable for its new conditions of cloud. Usually Mr. Stanfield gives us only solid rolling clouds behind his hills; I do not recollect his ever before painting their floating films in front of the crags, whose geology, by the way, seems rendered with the greatest care: and beautifully picturesque geology it is; the horizontal beds of the red and black lavas opposing the pillared precipice at the summit. Two points only seem to me to be regretted; the first, that the turf, half-way up the hillside, looks like a bank close to the spectator, the overhanging edges having the aspect of one thickness of turf only, though the little yellow and black figures below show us that these turf edges are at least from twelve to twenty feet high. The second, that the ship does not look as if she struck with any force or weight. I cannot get rid of the idea that she is a small model, and, moreover, a small

[1] [Henry Moore (1831–1895) did not exhibit any important seascape till the following year. His recognition by the Academy was long delayed; it was not till 1885 that he was elected A.R.A.; R.A. in 1893. Moore, like Brett, before taking to marine subjects, painted landscapes in the Pre-Raphaelite spirit.]

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model drawn with no great truth of perspective. I am certain the curves of her stern, where it rises from the deck, are false: if she is strained there, the strain should have been distinctly shown; and if not, the error in the lines of the starboard side would be demonstrable in a moment, if it were worth while to give a diagram for the purpose.

I like the black box particularly, though it does not look like one that would float. How well Mr. Stanfield could colour, if he liked, and took as much pains always as he has with this one dark square! What a gain, too, would it not be to us all, if he did take this trouble! The calm in the "Gulf of Salerno," for instance (371), would be quite a delightful picture, if only the sails had a little sun upon them. Even without sun, I wholly disbelieve in clay colour, either in sails or seamen, or in anything whatever but clay.

218. Sir Roger de Coverley in Church. (*C. R. Leslie, R.A.*)

Not attractive or interesting at first sight, it will repay an attentive study with continual increase of charm, and of wonderment. It is, of course, not well coloured; but though meagre and cold, it is not coarse; nor, in its own pale key, inharmonious; while the subtleties of expression are endlessly delightful in their delicate mystery. This light touch of Leslie's seems to me to show an immense advance in power since he gave us the somewhat laborious humour of Sancho and the Duchess.[1]

Do not miss the little girl holding up her hands in awe and delight, at the entire impropriety of behaviour on the part of the swallow, neither by servant nor knight to be touched on his wings, or impressed in his mind.

[1] [A favourite subject with Leslie. The picture in the Tate Gallery (No. 402), exhibited in 1844, is a replica of one exhibited in 1824.]

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219. AUTUMN MORNING. (*T. Creswick, R.A.*)

Well worked, but too complex: the fallen trunk with its bare branches on the right, though its lines, in mere composition, are useful in repeating those of the opposite bank, breaks up the picture by their number; we did not need so many straggling arms there. Mr. Creswick is also always a little too heavily green in foliage: when trees are green at all, they are green to brighter and better purpose.

283. A DREAM OF THE PAST.[1] (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

The high praise which I felt it my duty to give to this painter's work last year[2] was warranted by my observing in it, for the first time, the entirely inventive arrangement of colour and masses, which can be achieved only by the highest intellect. I must repeat briefly here what I have had occasion hundreds of times to explain elsewhere, but never yet often enough to get it generally understood—that painters are broadly divisible into three classes:[3] first, the large class who are more or less affected or false in all their work, and whose productions, however dexterous, are of no value whatever; secondly, the literally true painters, who

[1] [Better known by the title in the catalogue, "Sir Isumbras at the Ford." An interesting account of the painting of this picture, and of its hostile reception by the critics, is given in *The Life and Letters of Millais*, vol. i. pp. 306–323, where also a reproduction of the skit by Fred. Sandys is given. Millais, Rossetti, and Holman Hunt are represented crossing the ford on a braying ass, which is labelled "J. R., Oxon"—entitled "A Nightmare." The satirical verses below Sandys's print are said to be taken from the "Metrical Romance of the Man in Brasse and his Asse, by Thomas le Tailleur." Millais both resented Ruskin's criticism and took it to heart. "Ruskin said it was not a failure but a fiasco," said Millais once; "so I kicked it over in a passion. The hole is there now" (*Millais and his Works*, by M. H. Spielmann, p. 96). He proceeded, however, when the picture was returned unsold from the Academy, to repaint the horse entirely. The picture was bought in the following year by the painter's friend, Charles Reade. It next belonged to Mr. John Graham, and on his death Mr. R. H. Benson bought it. In 1892, at Mr. Benson's suggestion, Millais again repainted some portions of the horse, and added the trappings. The reproduction here given is of the picture in its present state.]

[2] ["Titian himself could hardly head him now," p. 56, above.]

[3] [The nearest approach to an explicit classification of painters into (1) false, (2) true, and (3) inventive may now be read in the additional passage from the MS. of *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii., which is printed in Vol. XI. pp. xvii.–xxi. But the division of painters into these classes is, as Ruskin says, implied "hundreds of times" in his previous works. See, for instance, Vol. III. p. 165, and Vol. X. p. 217 *seq.*]

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J.E. Millais R.A. Allen & Co. Sc.

**Sir Isumbras at the Ford**

From the picture in the possession of R.H. Benson Esq

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copy with various feeling, but unanimously honest purpose, the actualities of Nature, but can only paint them as they see them, without selection or arrangement; whose works are therefore of a moderate but sterling value, varying according to the interest of the subject; lastly, the inventive painters, who are not only true in all they do, but compose and relieve the truths they paint, so as to give to each the utmost possible value; which last class is in all ages a very small one; and it is a matter to congratulate a nation upon, when an artist rises in the midst of it who gives any promise of belonging to this great Imaginative group of Masters.

And this promise was very visible in the works of Millais last year; a new power of conception being proved in them —to instance two things among many—by the arrangement of the myrtle branches in the "Peace," and the play of the colours in the heap of "Autumn Leaves." There was a slovenliness and imperfection in many portions, however, which I did not speak of, because I thought them accidental —consequent, probably, on too exulting a trial of his new powers, and likely to disappear as he became accustomed to them. But, as it is possible to stoop to victory, it is also possible to climb to defeat; and I see with consternation that it was not the Parnassian rock which Mr. Millais was ascending, but the Tarpeian. The change in his manner, from the years of "Ophelia" and "Mariana" to 1857, is not merely Fall—it is Catastrophe; not merely a loss of power, but a reversal of principle: his excellence has been effaced, "as a man wipeth a dish—wiping it, and turning it upside down."[1] There may still be in him power of repentance, but I cannot tell: for those who have never known the right way, its narrow wicket-gate stands always on the latch; but for him who, having known it, has wandered thus insolently, the by-ways to the prison-house are short, and the voices of recall are few.

I have not patience much to examine into the meaning

[1] [2 Kings xxi. 13.]

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of the picture under consideration. If it has one, it should not have been disguised by the legend associated with it, which, by the way, does not exist in the Romance from which it professes to be quoted, and is now pretty generally understood to be only a clever mystification by one of the artist's friends, written chiefly with the view of guarding the awkward horse against criticism. I am not sure whether the bitterest enemies of Pre-Raphaelitism have yet accused it of expecting to cover its errors by describing them in bad English.[1]

Putting the legend, however, out of question, the fancy of the picture is pretty, and might have been sublime, but that it is too ill painted to be dwelt upon. The primal error in pictorial grammar, of painting figures in twilight as bright as yellow and vermilion can make them, while the towers and hills, far above and far more exposed to light, are yet dark and blue, could hardly have been redeemed by any subsequent harmonies of tone, much less by random brilliancy; and the mistake of painting the water brighter than the sky which it reflects, though constant among inferior painters in subordinate parts of their work, is a singularly disgraceful one for a painter of standing.

These, and the other errors or shortcomings in the work, too visible to need proving, and too many to bear numbering, are all the less excusable because the thought of the picture was a noble one, and might seem both justly to claim, and tenderly to encourage, the utmost skill and patience in its rendering. It does not matter whether we

[1] [The lines written for the picture by Tom Taylor began thus :—

"The goode hors that the knyghte bestrode,
I trow his backe it was full brode,
And wighte and warie still he rode,
Noght reckinge of rivere;
He was so mickle and so stronge,
And thereto so wonderlich longe,
In lande was none his peer.
N'as hors but by him seemed smalle.
The knyghte him ycleped Launcival,
But lords at borde and grooms in stalle
Ycleped him Graund Destrere."

They were described as being "from the Metrical Romance of Sir Ysumbras."

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take it as a fact or as a type: whether we look verily upon an old knight riding home in the summer twilight, with the dust of his weary day's journey on his golden armour, taking the woodman's children across the river with him, holding the girl so tenderly that she does not so much as feel the grasp of the gauntlets, but holds the horse's mane as well, lest she should fall; or whether we receive it as a type of noble human life, tried in all war, and aged in all counsel and wisdom, finding its crowning work at last to be bearing the children of poverty in its arms, and that the best use of its panoply of battle is to be clasped by the feeble fingers, wearied with gathering the sheddings of the autumnal woods. It might bear a deeper meaning even than this: it might be an image less of life than of the great Christian Angel of Death, who gives the eternal nobleness to small and great, and clasps the mean and the mighty with his golden armour—Death, bearing the two children with him across the calm river, whither they know not; one questioning the strange blue eyes which she sees fixed on heaven, the other only resting from his labour, and feeling no more his burden. All this, and much more than this—for the picture might be otherwise suggestive to us in a thousand ways—it would have brought home at once to the heart of every spectator, had the idea but been realized with any steadiness of purpose or veracity of detail. As it stands, it can only be considered as a rough sketch of a great subject, injudiciously exposed to general criticism, and needing both modification in its arrangement and devoted labour in its future realization.

I am sorrowfully doubtful, however, how far Mr. Millais may yet be capable of such labour. There are two signs conspicuous in his this year's work, of augury strangely sinister: the first, an irregularity in the conception of facts, quite unprecedented in any work that I know in the Realistic schools of any age; the second, a warped feeling in the selection of facts, peculiar, as far as I know, to Millais from his earliest youth.

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I say, first, an irregularity of conception. Thus, it seems only to have struck the painter suddenly, as he was finishing the knight's armour, that it ought to be more or less reflective; and he gives only one reflection in it—of the crimson cloth of the saddle, that one reflection being violently exaggerated: for though, from a golden surface, it would have been, as he has rendered it, warmer than the crimson, no reflection is ever *brighter* than the thing reflected. But all the rest of the armour is wholly untouched by the colour of the children's dresses, or of their glowing faces, or of the river or sky. And if Mr. Millais meant it to be old armour, rough with wear, it ought to have been deadened and darkened in colour, hacked with edges of weapons, stained with stains of death; if he meant it merely to be dusty, the dust should have lain white on some of the ridges, been clearly absent from others, and should have been dark where it was wet by the splashing of the horse. The ripple of the water against the horse itself, however, being unnoticed, it is little wonder if the dash of the chance spray is missed. A more manifest sign still of this irregular appliance of mind is in the fact that the peacock's plume, the bundle of wood, and the stripes of the saddle-cloth are painted with care; while the children's faces, though right in expression, are rudely sketched, with unrounded edges, half in rose colour and half in dirty brown. Vestiges of his old power of colouring, still unattainable by any other man, exist, however, in that saddle-cloth and in the peacock's feather. But the second sign, the warping of feeling, is a still more threatening one.

The conception of his second picture (408)[1] is an example of the darkest error in judgment—the fatalest failure in the

[1] ["The Escape of a Heretic, 1559." A scene, as described in an illustrative note in the catalogue, from the Spanish Inquisition. A Spanish lover, disguised as a monk, rescuing his mistress, who has already been robed in her fiery gaberdine for the *auto-da-fé*; in the background a monk, bound and gagged. The subject was suggested to Millais by some engravings and documents shown to him by Stirling-Maxwell (see *Life and Letters of Millais*, i. 319). The picture is now in the possession of Sir W. Houldsworth, M.P.]

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instinct of the painter's mind. At once coarse and ghastly in fancy, exaggerated and obscure in action, the work seems to have been wrought with the resolute purpose of confirming all that the bitterest adversaries of the school have delighted to allege against it; and whatever friendship has murmured, or enmity proclaimed, of its wilful preference of ugliness to beauty, is now sealed into everlasting acceptance. It is not merely in manifest things, like the selection of such a model as this for the type of the foot of a Spanish lady, or the monstrous protrusion of the lover's lip in his intense appeal for silence; but the dwelling perpetually upon the harshest lines of form, and most painful conditions of expression, both in human feature and in natural objects, which long ago, when they appeared in Millais's picture of the "Carpenter's Shop,"[1] restrained the advance of Pre-Raphaelitism; and would arrest its advance now, unless there were other painters to support its cause, who will disengage it from unnaturalness of error, and vindicate it from confusion of contempt.

For Mr. Millais there is no hope but in a return to quiet perfectness of work. I cannot bring myself to believe that powers were given to him only to be wasted, which are so great, even in their aberration, that no pictures in the Academy are so interesting as these, or can be for a moment compared with them for occasional excellence and marvellousness of execution. Yet it seems to be within the purpose of Providence sometimes to bestow great powers only that we may be humiliated by their failure, or appalled by their annihilation; and sometimes to strengthen the hills with iron, only that they may attract the thunderbolt. A time is probably fixed in every man's career, when his own choice determines the relation of his endowments with his destiny; and the time has come when this painter must choose, and choose finally, whether the eminence he cannot abdicate is to make him conspicuous in honour, or in ruin.

[1] [In the Academy of 1850: see Vol. XII. p. 320.]

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355. Bon Jour, Messieurs. (*F. Stone, A.*[1])

Thank you, Frank; very heartily thank you. There has not been a greater benefit, in way of pictures, bestowed on us this year. It is good for us, after walking, as walk we must so often, up and down the grey streets of London, watching the gay carriages with the sorrowful faces in them, and the fading beauties, and wasting pleasures, and yet more wasting toils, to remember that within a bird's flight of us, along the top of Calais cliffs, the fisher's cart-horse trots to market through the morning air; that the idle fisher-boy tosses his limbs behind for gladness; and that fisher-girls are laughing, with a bird's song in every laugh;—crowned with sacredness of happy life, and strength of careless peace, and helpful innocence.

442. Morning after a Heavy Gale. (*E. W. Cooke, A.*)

Very awful, after we have looked at it a little while; at least that bronze vessel is so to me—a ship that is not, and yet is—the true spectre ship, whose sight is destruction; nor less so the skeleton of the boat with the wild waves sifting through the bones of her, and the single figure waiting on the desolate ship's deck, and saved by its faithfulness. Was Mr. Cooke indeed a little inspired by Turner's great "Shipwreck,"[2] or is the partial resemblance of arrangement, in the position of the larger boat and wreck, accidental? I wish he would try to beat Turner in one thing, in which not only Turner, but all marine painters whatever, to this day, are conquerable enough by a little pains —sea *foam;*[3] namely, When shall we have foam as well as waves? It *can* be drawn, not quite rightly, but far

[1] [Frank Stone (*b.* 1800), father of Mr. Marcus Stone, R.A., was elected A.R.A. in 1851. He died suddenly from heart disease two years after this picture was exhibited.]

[2] [No. 476 in the National Gallery: see Vol. XIII. p. 107.]

[3] [Compare Vol. XIII. pp. 110, 162.]

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better than ever hitherto; and the first painter who succeeds with it, provided he is at all a good artist in other respects, and has not merely found out a trick of foam, will make all bygone sea pieces look like the worn-out canvas waves of a theatre.

501. MONTAIGNE.[1] (*H. Wallis.*)

Not, I think, quite so successful as the "Chatterton" of last year; but it contends with greater difficulties, and is full of marvellous painting. It is terribly hurt by its frame, and by the surrounding colours and lights; seen through the hand, the effect is almost like reality. That is a beautifully characteristic fragment of homely French architecture seen through the window.

I should think this picture required long looking at, and that it is seen to greater disadvantage by careless passers-by than almost any of its neighbours.

542. RYDAL. (*J. M. Carrick.*)

This is the most important of the various studies from Nature, all more or less successful, which surround us in the Academy this year. I am heartily sorry to pass them by, *en masse*, especially as most of them, such as 214, 215, 268, 1136,[2] and others, are incomparably more elaborate and valuable than anything of the kind I have to notice in the water-colour exhibitions; only the water-colour draughtsmen have more power in educating public taste, partly from reputation and partly from the pleasantness of water-colour as a decoration of rooms; so that I can give no more time to these oil studies, various and beautiful as they are. This large one is most reverent in its fidelity to the reflections

[1] ["Montaigne: the library, from studies made at Montaigne's château in Gascony."]

[2] [214. "A Quiet Nook" (A. J. Stark). 215. "Craig-dulyn, Carnarvonshire" (J. W. Oakes; see p. 143 *n.*). 268. "A Stream from the Hills" (B. Leader, now R.A.). 1136. "Russ, in the Dargle, co. Wicklow" (T. F. Collier).]



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of the quiet lake, most skilful in its rendering of the dim light on the distant hills. I never have seen retiring distance, in light of this kind, so well rendered. The stream has been studied with equal care; but it is impossible to paint clear running water ripple by ripple: some conventionality of freedom must be allowed always.

556. THE GOING DOWN TO NAZARETH. (*W. C. T. Dobson.*)

Very tender in expression, but commonplace; and in general idea more or less false or improbable. Mr. Dobson must see to it, or he will be cast away on the rock of Purism; he is already, both in this picture and the "Reading the Psalms" (No. 68), more infected than he was last year by the great Purist theory of the sanctity of clay colour.[1] Now it is precisely clay and its colour which are the least sacred things in the world: because all heavenly effort or action whatever is a conquest of the clay—from the first conquest of it by the breath of life to the last conquest of it by the baptism with fire; and in the least things, as in the greatest, it is fire and its colour which are sacred—not dust. These imperfect religious painters, headed and misguided by Ary Scheffer, are all just like Naaman: they think they cannot worship rightly unless there "be given unto thy servant two mules' burden of earth."[2]

562. WAITING FOR THE VERDICT. (*A. Solomon.*)

Very full of power; but rather a subject for engraving than painting. It is too painful to be invested with the charm of colour.[3]

[1] [See above, 1856, 532.]

[2] [2 Kings v. 17. For another reference to Ary Scheffer, see below, p. 180. Compare also, for a summary of Ruskin's views on the sanctity of colour, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi.]

[3] [This picture was exhibited in the following year at Liverpool, and popular feeling favoured it for the prize of the Liverpool Academy, which, however, was awarded to Millais's "Blind Girl." A letter from Ruskin on the subject is given below, p. 327.]

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597. PLOUGHING AT SEVILLE, 1857. (*R. Ansdell.*[1])

More interesting than cattle pieces are generally; but without special merit of any kind, and quite out of its proper place. Why should work like this be on the line?—unless the pictures are treated as furniture only, and the black masses in this case set off the room: I believe there is an arbitrary rule about the size of animals, which allows those drawn to a diminished scale to be on the line, but mercilessly raises those which, like Landseer's (77),[2] are of life size; I believe all such rules to be very harmful. Good work should be put near us, whatever its scale; and we ought to be able at our ease to study the wonderful execution of the fur in Landseer's large grey mountain hare, and to see, without a telescope, that there *is* a hare in Mr. Oakes's exquisite Welsh foreground (596).[3] How foolish we shall think ourselves, when once we get rooms where we can put our year's pictures every one in a good place, for ever having done painters all this injustice, and brought upon ourselves all this discomfort, merely for want of a furlong or two more of wall, and waste ground!

602. AUTUMN FLOWERS. (*Miss A. F. Mutrie.*)

This lady's work is always beautiful; but there is some incongruity between the luxuriant evidence of education in the group of central flowers and the roughness of the ferny bank they rest upon. All true lovers of art, or of flowers, would rejoice in seeing a bank of blossoms fairly painted; but it must be a bank with its *own* blossoms, not an unexpected picnic of polite flowers in the country. Neither need the sky be subdued in colour. I believe the

[1] [Richard Ansdell (1815–1885), animal painter, first exhibited 1840. He collaborated at various times with Creswick, J. Phillip, and W. P. Frith. Elected A.R.A. 1861, R.A. 1870.]

[2] ["Scene in Braemar—Highland Deer," etc.]

[3] ["Caernarvonshire Hills, from Anglesea."]

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most beautiful position in which flowers can possibly be seen is precisely their most natural one—low flowers relieved by grass or moss, and tree blossoms relieved against the sky. How it happens that no flower-painter has yet been moved to draw a cluster of boughs of peach blossom, or cherry blossom, or apple blossom just as they grow, with the deep blue sky between every bud and petal, is more than I can understand; except that I know, in art, the likeliest and properest thing for everybody to do is almost always the last that will be done.

614. ADOPTING A CHILD. (*F. B. Barwell.*)

A well-considered and expressive picture; somewhat hurt by the unmanageable phenomena of modern life, in dress and book-cases; which are the more to be regretted, because the arrangement of purple and green in the mother's shawl shows that Mr. Barwell could produce majestic pieces of colour with other materials. It tells its story plainly enough; but if the spectator passes hastily, he might, nevertheless, miss the indication of the reason for the adoption, in the portrait of their own lost child, which hangs behind the parents; and to which the girl, shrinking from them to her mother's side, evidently bears a close resemblance.

994. "WHEN THE LEAVES BEGIN TO TURN." (*A. W. Hunt.*)

Consummate in easy execution and blended colour; there is nothing else like it this year. The subject is ill chosen, being confused in mass and incapable of effective treatment; but, taken merely as a study, birch foliage and mossy stones *cannot* be done better. I do not know what kind of feelings the inferior painters of such subjects have whose works, by chance or right, are on the line this year in the principal rooms; but I think that if I had painted some of those well-shown foregrounds, I would rather have dashed my

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hand through my picture at once, than have left it in a good place while such a work as this was on the ground. No. 761,[1] by the same hand, is a very remarkable drawing, and the best study of sky that I can find this year; notable especially for its expression of the *consumption* of the clouds —not their driving away, but melting away in the warmer air. A third work, 566, apparently the most important of the three, is hung out of sight.

The writer of the judicious and interesting criticism which has this year given so beneficial a direction to the authority of the *Times*, in matters of art, has anticipated nearly all I had to say on the subject of Portraiture,* except in one particular. Some expressions in the paper of Wednesday last, respecting the tiresomeness of *conventional* backgrounds, might be construed by a hasty reader into general blame of *distinctness* or completion in backgrounds; and this was not, I believe, what the writer meant—certainly

* My notes on the pictures of Millais might also have been shortened if I could have anticipated the careful analysis given in the *Times;* but as they were in corrected type before the appearance of the Wednesday's paper, I left them as they were written, the coincidence in the points chosen for animadversion being confirmatory of the justice of the independent criticisms.[2]

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[1] [761. "Snowdon after an April Hailstorm." 566. "Time and Tide."]

[2] [The *Times* of May 13, 1857, contained a Third Notice of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. A considerable portion of this was devoted to a criticism of "Sir Ysumbras at the Ford" and the "Escape of a Heretic." On the subject of portraiture, the writer praised a portrait by Sir J. W. Gordon for its absence of "the stereotyped superfluities of background—no red curtain, no column, no inkstand, no dashing landscape. How those accepted portrait backgrounds pall upon one! How many a tolerably painted head becomes intolerable by their intrusion." The following letter from Millais to his wife refers to the criticisms in question: "Doubtless you have seen the *Times* and its criticism. When I heard it was written in the same spirit as usual I did not read it. I therefore only know of its import through my friends. The general feeling is that it is not of the slightest importance. Criticism has been so tampered with that what is said carries little or no weight. Ruskin, I hear, has a pamphlet in the press which takes a *pitying* tone at my failure. The wickedness and envy at the bottom of all this are so apparent to me that I disregard all the reviews (I have not read *one*); but I shall certainly have this kind of treatment all my life. The public crowd round my pictures more than ever, and this, I think, must be the main cause of animosity. . . . I should tell you that although my friend Tom Taylor is said to have written the first two reviews in the *Times*, this last is not attributed to him."—*Life and Letters of Millais*, i. 323.]

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not what he ought to have meant. The accessories of a portrait should be completely painted, both for the sake of their artistical use and explanatory power. Distinctness and force of collateral masses are of the greatest use in relieving the more delicate gradations of colour in a well-painted face; and the greatest portrait-painters, Titian, Veronese, Velasquez, and Raphael, introduce the most trenchant, clear, and complete backgrounds. Indeed, the first three so rejoiced in quantity of accessories that, when engaged on important portraits, they would paint large historical pictures merely by way of illustration or introduction. The priceless Veronese, which I rejoice to hear has been just secured for the nation, the "Triumph of Alexander," was painted only to introduce portraits of the Pisani,[1] and chiefly to set off, to the best advantage, the face of one fair girl. Generally speaking, if a painter is great, he will find his background serviceable in proportion to its space; and although, in modern portraiture, splendour of background is rarely possible or suitable, its *definiteness* should always be insisted upon; not only because it tends to make the manner of the work better throughout, but because accessories, rightly designed, are explanatory of character; and we like, or ought to like, better to see a man in whom we are interested sitting in his favourite room and accustomed chair than isolated among the sullen fogs or idle fancies of idealism.

I cannot speak of Architecture, as it would need the dwelling at length on almost inexplicable details; but I take leave to wish the good people of Halifax joy of their Town-hall (1073), that is to be, I hope, pleading only with Mr. Scott[2] for a little interference of some sort with the lines of quatrefoils in its roof (1067); and I ought not to speak of Sculpture, because I have little pleasure in it when unconnected with architecture: so that I only go into the

[1] [No. 294 in the National Gallery. For other references to the purchase of it, see Vol. XIII. pp. 38, 244, 287, 552.]

[2] [Sir George Gilbert Scott, R.A. (1811–1878), the eminent architect. For various references to him by Ruskin, see General Index.]

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sculpture-room to look at my friends' works—such as Mr. A. Munro's[1] bust of Dr. Acland (1280), which I hope I am not wrong in thinking beautiful; or Mr. Woolner's[2] medallion of Carlyle (1368), which I know I am not wrong in thinking like. It is much to be regretted that Mr. Woolner's highly-wrought bust of Tennyson was not sent here instead of to Manchester,[3] as we might then have compared in it, and in Mr. W. Brodie's (1354), two conceptions of the noble head, each containing elements which are wanting in the other.

But what a dark sign it is of the state of our architectural schools that there should never be seen in this room one example of sculpture applicable to external decoration, or subordinated to an architectural use![4]

[1] [Alexander Munro (1825–1871), the son of a stone-mason, came to London in 1848, and was employed for some time on the stone carving for the new Houses of Parliament. He was intimate with Rossetti, and references to him are frequent in the memoirs of the Pre-Raphaelite circle. He did some carvings for the Oxford Museum, and made a medallion of Woodward, the architect: see Introduction to Vol. XVI. Rossetti introduced Munro to Ruskin, who became a friend, and was godfather to one of his sons. Munro took a modelling class at the Working Men's College. On March 19, 1858, Madox Brown, in recording a lecture by Ruskin at the Working Men's College, says: "Ruskin as eloquent as ever, and as widely popular with the men. He flattered Rossetti hugely, and spoke of Munro, in conjunction with Baron Marochetti, as the two noble sculptors of England whom all the aristocracy patronized."—Rossetti's *Letters to William Allingham*, p. 90. For another reference to Munro, see *Two Paths*, § 163 *n.*]

[2] [Thomas Woolner (1825–1892), sculptor and poet, was one of the original Pre-Raphaelite Brethren, to whose journal, the *Germ*, he contributed two cantos of the poem, "My Beautiful Lady." Discouraged by the ill-success of his idealistic sculpture, Woolner sailed for Melbourne in 1852 to try his fortunes in the gold-fields; his departure inspired Madox Brown's picture "The Last of England." He returned in 1854; and the works referred to above were the turning-point in his career. He was elected A.R.A. in 1871, R.A. in 1874. Woolner's bust of Tennyson is now in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge: a replica of it, by Woolner himself, is in the Abbey near the poet's grave. In the *Memoir* of Tennyson by his son (vol. i. p. 431), there is the following note from the poet's diary, November 1858: "I have just seen Ruskin. He says that the signor's (G. F. Watts') portrait of me is the grandest thing he has seen in that line; but so he said of Woolner's bust." The present Lord Tennyson states that the only other bust from life of his father was made also by Woolner in 1873 (*ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 431).]

[3] [*i.e.*, to the Art Treasures Exhibition in that year.]

[4] [The importance of associating architecture and sculpture, now better recognised in this country, was a favourite theme with Ruskin. See, *e.g.*, *Seven Lamps*, ch. iv.; *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 61; and *Two Paths*, Lecture iv.]

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# SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

THERE is a general character manifested in the pretty and richly-decorated room of this Society, which appears to me deserving of some serious consideration before we take note of any of the drawings separately.

Here are three hundred and four drawings by forty-seven * painters, many of them elaborately finished, all showing that the artists have given their complete energy to them; and among the three hundred and four there is not *one* which expresses, or summons, a serious thought. There are, indeed, a few love passages; but they reach no further than an anxious look, or a joyful hesitation. There are the children in the wood, shown by gaslight in the middle of moonlight; and there is a tearful pilgrim, with a superb scallop, and a staff which it is to be hoped, as he is an old man, that during most of his pilgrimage somebody else has carried for him. There is an angel under great difficulties in appearing to the shepherds, in consequence of their unanimously refusing to look at him; and there are two pretty fancies, of a peasant's return, in summer night, to his cottage among the deep corn, and a fisherman's, in stormy summer dawn, to his cottage on the shore. I think these are all that are so much as intended to be pathetic or suggestive.

Now there must be, of course, a certain proper and healthy demand in London, every spring, for pictures which mean nothing, just as there is for strawberries and asparagus.

* Why I say three hundred and four instead of three hundred and seventeen will appear presently.



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We do not want to be always philosophical, and may wisely ask for and enjoy a certain average number of paintings of roses and quinces, of showers and sunbeams, of beaches where we bathe, and glens where we shoot or clamber. All this is perfectly right and refreshing; nevertheless, a Society which takes upon itself, as its sole function, the supply of these mild demands of the British public, must be prepared ultimately to occupy a position much more corresponding to that of the firm of Fortnum and Mason, than to any hitherto held by a body of artists; and to find their art becoming essentially a kind of Potted Art, of an agreeable flavour, suppliable and taxable as a patented commodity, but in no wise to be thought of or criticised as *Living* Art. For living art, or art at all, properly so called, never has been, nor can be, developed in answer to a demand of this inferior kind; nor is it possible even for a simple landscape-painter to treat any of his simplest subjects worthily, unless, as he passes through the world, other things strike his eyes and fancy than the mere pleasantnesses of its outward aspect. Every form and colour bears new meaning to us as soon as we begin to understand the greater purposes of life, and to feel the interest of its events. We may stand aside from both, set no hand to any but our own quiet work, pass our days in happy ramble or rest, sketch-book in hand, among the innocent glens and by the silent shores; but if, meantime, we are incapable of such reflection as shall make us know, in the depths of those glens, and in the cry of the herd of waves about the beach, their true connection with the thoughts, and joys, and sorrows of men, we never shall paint one leaf nor foam-wreath rightly.

I said just now that the drawings in the room were three hundred and four only, because I wished to make separate reference to those of Mr. David Cox. I believe the health of this artist does not admit of his now devoting much labour to his pictures; and therefore that we ought not to class them among the other works as representative of *effort*, but rather as expressions of the feeling of a painter's

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mind at rest.[1] Be this as it may, they form a complete exception to the general law of failure in sentiment, of which I have been speaking. They are deeply pathetic, and, as far as they reach, exquisitely harmonious in tone: the Caernarvon [No. 117], in its warm grey walls and dark sea, and the Bolton Abbey,* in its melancholy glow of twilight, are strangely true and deeply felt. But there is not any other landscape which comes near these works of David Cox in simplicity or seriousness.

Perhaps the Highland scene,[2] No. 11, by Richardson,[3] may be taken as giving the clearest example of this fault in the work of a very clever artist. Mr. Richardson is gradually gaining in manual power, and opposes cobalt and burnt sienna very pleasantly. But he seems always to conceive a Highland landscape only as a rich medley of the same materials—a rocky bank, blue at one place and brown at another; some contorted Scotch firs, some fern, some dogs, and some sportsmen: the whole contemplated under the cheering influence of champagne, and considered every way delightful. The Highlands *are* delightful, but, for the most part, in another way than this. I do not regret that Mr. Richardson has given this one reading of them, the reading that pleasantly occurs to an active youth in his long vacation; but there ought to be, on the walls, the other readings, too, of those desolate glens, with the dark-brown torrents surging monotonously among their lower rocks,

* No. 299. The degree of light and warmth obtained on the ruins by the use of subdued colour is by much the most instructive thing, to me, in the exhibition.

[1] [This criticism must have pleased the painter. "It strikes me," he wrote to his son in 1853, "that the committee think my drawings too rough. They forget that they are *the work of the mind*, which I consider very far before portraits of places." (Roget's *History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, ii. 162.) For references to Ruskin's notices of Cox, see below, p. 195 *n.*]

[2] ["Scene in Glen Nevis."]

[3] [Thomas Miles Richardson (1813–1890), of Newcastle, was elected a member of the Society in 1851. He was a prolific exhibitor, a large proportion of his drawings being of Scottish subjects. The Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum has several examples.]

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cutting them into the cup-like pools where the deep stream eddies like black oil, and the moth, fallen weary out of the wind on its surface, circles round and round, struggling vainly; of the little spaces under the fern where the glen widens, and the sward is smooth as if for knights' lists, and sweet as if for dancing of fairies' feet, and lonely as if it grew over an enchanted grave; of those low alder thickets, set in soft shade where the stream is broad by the stepping-stones—the drowned lamb lying on the bank, under their stooping leaves, since the last flood; of those sweet winding paths through the oat-fields, and under the ash-trees, where the air breathes so softly when the berries are blush-scarlet in the setting sun, and more softly still when the cold, clear, northern light dies over the purple ranges jagged and wild. Are not these seen everywhere? and seen day by day, and yet never thought upon; felt, I believe, more at his heart by the half-starved shepherd boy than by the skilfullest of our painters. And I am the more sorry that Mr. Richardson does not yet feel the expression in Highland scenery, because I think there may be traced considerable power of composition in the passages of these distant hills; and the large piece of rock on the left is very nearly well drawn: in fact, the old established system of taking out triangles of light and laying on sharp edges of darkness has been nearly perfected by Mr. Richardson, and does so much more in his hands than most other people's, that if he ever determines to draw in a pure and right way, I should think he would reach far. He seems to have a good eye for colour—there is a very pretty piece of speckled grey in the square rock on the right at the bottom—but he is not at the slightest trouble to fit the colours of shadows to the lights, or of dark sides to light sides; and his ungrammatical brilliancy will therefore always look only like what it is—very pretty warm colour, but never like sunshine. It is worth while to stand midway between the screens on this side of the room, and look alternately from this drawing to Mr. Fripp's (37), which is very true in

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relations of sun and shadow colour. Mr. Richardson's will perhaps, even after many glances, be thought the prettier drawing; but only in Mr. Fripp's will be seen the Highland sun and air.

And Mr. Richardson is the less to be excused for not entering completely into Highland character, because he can enter into no other. He has fallen so passively into the habit of drawing rocks in sharp angles, and a wild litter of fern and grass among them, that he can compose a landscape of no other materials; and we find "Catanzaro, the capital of Calabria" (94), looking like a number of models of Italian buildings, erected by some imaginative Highland proprietor in Ross-shire.

18. CORNFIELD, NEAR HASTINGS. (*C. Davidson.*[1])

Very true and modest; as are all Mr. Davidson's works. His companion picture (89, "Haymaking, Lewes") gives me a great desire to go haymaking in Sussex this summer. What a lovely field that must be!

87. SCENE AT THE HEAD OF GLENCOE. (*G. Fripp.*[2])

This drawing has just missed being an exceedingly fine one: the glow of red light on the hills on the right is perfectly imagined; the slightest more gradation in it, and a purer touch or two at the brightest part, would have brought it into great beauty. The cows are individually stiff, but excellently put in place. The whole is full of genuine work, and real look of Highlands.

[1] [For an earlier reference to Mr. Charles Davidson, see *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (note added in the 5th ed., 1851), Vol. III. p. 599.]

[2] ["Scene at the Head of Glencoe, taken from the road before descending the Pass." George Arthur Fripp (*b.* 1813), of Bristol, was an exhibitor from 1841. An oil picture by him of Mont Blanc from Courmayeur (in the Liverpool Gallery) is said to have elicited praise from Turner. He afterwards devoted himself only to water-colours. Scotland was one of his favourite sketching-grounds, and he visited Balmoral by command to make drawings for Queen Victoria. Examples of his work may be seen at the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

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126. "On the Derwent (near the entrance to Borrowdale: evening)" is also very warm with sweet sunshine; but Mr. Fripp lets his colours get awkwardly entangled at the edges among his distant hills. He ought to use them much more neatly, and keep them purer, and draw more carefully. His *aim* in drawing is very right indeed; the rock structure in those Glencoe masses being quite true, only messed a little in the working.

45. VAL ST. NICOLAS. (*J. D. Harding.*)

I am glad to see the works of this master again in this room; but they do not look quite so distinct from the rest as they used to be: they are, if I mistake not, looser and flatter in touch than in old times. This is a clever drawing; but Mr. Harding need not hope to draw Switzerland on these cheap terms. The flanks of the Alps are by no means films of blue colour, but very substantial and sturdy masses of chestnuts and walnuts, of cornfields and vineyards, of black pines and green meadows; all positively declaring themselves for pines, walnuts, corn, and grass, and requiring as such to be drawn; on peril, otherwise, of instant loss both of character in the nearer scene, and of height in the peaks beyond. If you hide the upper range of mountains in this drawing with your hand, you will find the lower one forms a very satisfactory distance: as such, the superimposed hills merely dwarf and encumber *it;* while, had it been drawn with its true detail, it would, on the contrary, have exalted *them.*

57. GLENARM, COUNTY ANTRIM. (*H. Gastineau.*[1])

There is a great deal of daylight and air in this picture; and Mr. Gastineau's work is taking at present rather a

[1] [Henry Gastineau (1790–1876) lived to be the oldest member of the Society, to which he was admitted as an Associate in 1821. He worked much for the engravers, and was also for many years engaged in teaching. The South Kensington Museum

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peculiar position on the walls, as almost alone representative of the old pure water-colour painting, executed without much subsequent sponging for texture, or body-colour washes and dashes. This drawing, as well as the more vigorous "St. Maurice" [No. 106], is very pure in execution, and has in consequence a pleasant unaffected character not otherwise attainable.

61. SUNSET. WINTER: A BLACK FROST. (*C. Branwhite.*[1])

This painter has, for some time back, shown considerable ability; but he must not hope to reach any sterling qualities without much closer study of Nature. It is really high time, considering how many treatises are written on perspective and optics, that our painters should understand, once for all, the difference between shadows and reflections; and that as some five or six hundred pictures of pretension are painted annually with reflection of sun or moon in water, it should be generally understood that the reflection of the sun does not radiate, any more than that of a white ball or a white wafer radiates; but that it is either a circle (in *absolutely* calm water), an oval, more or less elongated (in partly disturbed water), or, under certain circumstances, especially when the sun is low, a vertical pillar, more or less broken; each of these images spreading in flakes to right and left when there is much agitation in the water, but always rather narrowing than widening to the spectator's feet.[2]

has some of his drawings. Ruskin, as appears from an entry in his diary, had some acquaintance with the painter, who lived at Camberwell (compare Vol. XIII. p. 504) :—

> "*March* 9, 1844.— . . . Went down to call on Gastineau; showed me Turner's Deluge—a plate now not to be had—glorious—must try to get it. Couldn't praise his own much, which bothered me, but he seems a nice modest person, and bore my coolness well—told me much about clouds, which he has studied thoroughly, though to little purpose."]

[1] [Charles Branwhite (1817-1880) was elected an Associate of the Old Water-Colour Society in 1849. For some account of him, see the *History* of that Society, vol. ii. p. 336. He was a pupil of W. J. Müller.]

[2] [On the subject of reflections in water, see below, p. 474.]

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64. One of Nature's Ferneries, Guernsey. (*P. J. Naftel.*)

It looks like a true portrait of a beautiful spot, almost tropical or antediluvian in its ferny richness; and both this and Mr. Naftel's other drawings seem wrought with a real love of Nature, and a pleasant sense of daylight colour, without any affectation or desire to attract attention by trickeries. But I think Mr. Naftel has yet to do some massy and stern work in light and shade, and to discipline himself in point-drawing, before he will be able to express himself as he would like to do, and may do.

The two subjects, 64 and 96 ["The Brook in Spring, Guernsey"], are exquisitely pretty; but I believe it will be generally found that no *merely* pretty place is fit for pictorial treatment. Into all good subjects for painters' work, either human feeling must enter by some evidence of cultivation, or presence of dwelling-place, or of ruin; or else there must be some sublime features indicative of the distress as well as the beauty of Nature. I think this law admits of no exception, but I have not space here to explain or apply it.[1]

130. Faust's First Sight of Margaret. (*F. W. Burton.*[2])

I am at a loss to know why this picture is in a central position; it possesses no special merit of any kind. The

[1] [On "the essential connection of the power of landscape with human emotion," see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. i. ("The Dark Mirror"), §§ 8, 9.]

[2] [Sir Frederic William Burton (1816–1890), Director of the National Gallery (1874–1894), elected Associate of the Royal Hibernian Academy, 1837, enjoyed a large practice in Dublin as a portrait-painter. Member of the Old Water-Colour Society, 1856; his drawings a feature of its exhibitions till 1870. His well-known portrait (in chalk) of George Eliot is in the National Portrait Gallery. One of his subject-drawings is in the Dublin National Gallery. For a reference by Ruskin to Burton's management of the National Gallery, see *The Laws of Fésole*, ch. iv. § 16 *n.*]

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face of Margaret is pretty, but wholly untouched by the feeling which prompts her first sharp answer: "I am neither a lady, nor pretty, and can go home by myself."[1] For the rest, it is simply a stage dress and a stage stride; and the colouring is more false and crude than that of almost any picture in the room. The red of the cloak, for instance, is daubed about at random, coming bright in the shadow or dirty in the light, as chance will have it. I entirely dislike Faust,[2] and am sick of illustrations of it; but I wonder whether any painter will ever do it so much justice as to represent Mephistopheles with the face of a man who could either tempt or deceive.

### 211, 222. Welsh Bridge and Torrent [Valley of the Lledr]. (*G. Dodgson.*[3])

I like Mr. Dodgson's sketches (they hardly claim to be more) better than *any* landscape work here, David Cox's only excepted. There is very great perception of colour in them, and evidently entire fidelity to his subject. The stream in 222 is the only genuine piece of torrent-drawing in the exhibition. All the rest are done by recipe, so much scratch and so much dash; this is a hard and steady try at a real stream in flood. Mr. Dodgson's fern-drawing, too, is much more subtle than any one else's; his ferns are not merely green central rods, with so many green arms on each side, but real, crisped, quaint, varied leaves, with personal character in them. Still his work only reaches a certain length, and he seems quite careless in choice of subject. I hope he will some day choose more scrupulously, and finish more carefully.

[1] ["Bin weder Fräulein, weder schön,
Kann ungeleitet nach Hause gehn."]

[2] [See Vol. V. p. 330 *n.*]

[3] [George Haydock Dodgson (1811–1880) had been apprenticed to George Stephenson, the railway engineer, but afterwards gave up surveying for water-colour painting. An accident in early life caused his hand to be affected with a nervous tremor—a fact which naturally affected his manipulation (J. L. Roget's *History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, vol. ii. p. 307).]



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217. At the Fountain. 244. Village Musicians, Brittany. (*F. W. Topham.*[1])

The delicate feeling and expression in these two drawings induce me to hope that Mr. Topham may produce works of sterling quality if he continue to aim at points of character. As paintings, both are somewhat thin and incomplete, being too much wrought with broad flat washes; very good things for grounds, but wholly incapable of producing any right result without severe drawing above them. The girl's head in 217 is, however, very pretty, and satisfactorily finished.

302. Hareem Life, Constantinople.[2] (*J. F. Lewis.*)

Though this drawing represents but a small portion of the year's labour of the master (it being only through untoward chance that it has no companion), it may give rise to some serious question how far the conscientiousness of completion ought to be allowed to extend. I know well that Lewis could not have satisfied himself with less than the exquisite accomplishment of every detail which he has given us here; nay, I know that he is not satisfied even with what he has given, and would forbid me that word "accomplishment," if he saw it being written. But it seems to me questionable how far he ought to consult his own satisfaction; still more questionable whether so much invention, toil, intensity of observation and of mechanical skill, should be trusted to one poor little piece of white linen film, fifteen inches square. If water-colour were infusible enamel, if the ground were a thick plate of beaten

[1] [Francis William Topham (1808–1877), engraver and water-colour painter, father of F. W. W. Topham. His works consist of figure-subjects obtained in Ireland, Scotland, France, Spain, and Italy. Specimens may be seen in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

[2] [This drawing was bought at the time by the collector of Turner's works, Mr. Windus (for whom, see Vol. III. p. 234 *n.*). It changed hands in 1859 (255 guineas).]

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gold, if the English public were ready to receive a noble picture as a rich treasure, and take the charge of it as a weighty trust, we might reasonably ask Mr. Lewis to finish his work with his full strength, and make it right, at any cost. But now, when the mildew of winter and sunshine of summer, the city's smoke and country's frost, are alike sure to do fatal work, within a very short series of years, on the plurality of works executed in these delicate materials, and either exposed to the dusty honours of modern exhibitions, or condemned to the humid seclusion of the drawing-room when the family are "out of town," it seems to me mere waste of intellect to bestow so much labour on a single drawing. Surely the chances of safety, such as they are, might be multiplied; and six or seven drawings of less elaborate but equally admirable execution might at once educate the public eye by their diffusion, and fall, perhaps, one or two out of the six, into the possession of persons who would seriously value and safely guard them. No one is less disposed than I to advocate any loose or sketchy methods of painting; but there is a firm, adequate, and manly execution, such as that adopted by the Venetian painters when they were in a hurry, which, while expressing a perfect conception of the finished object, and reaching as deep and substantial colour as more elaborate work, yet attains its ends at once with a magician's speed and a wise steward's economy. The practice of such modes of expression has great tendency to enlarge the range of thought, and give majesty to its tones: for there is something elevating in the very habit of scorning our own work; and, frequently, grander things were done by Titian or Giorgione when they were filling a spare panel in a corner of a refectory, or colouring, half in play, the bit of plaster left between two ugly window-sills of a friend's house, than when they were bringing all their science and skill to bear on some beloved design in their painting-rooms.

And there is this further advantage about a rough piece of work, that time, or chance injury, cannot so grievously

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affect it as they can a more delicate one. Nothing is so painful as to see what has once been exquisitely complete, become spotted, or scratched, or faded. But a rough chalk sketch, or a bold and massively cast fresco, will bear many a stain and scar, and fail in many a flake of colour, without materially losing its power over our minds. If the slightest spot or injury touched the trellis-work and drapery in Lewis's pictures, no one would ever be able to look at them again till they had been "restored"; and still less, after such restoration, any one who knew the master's work.

In the case of Lewis there is this further reason for pleading for quicker work, that his invention and power over character are more distinctive even than his subtle execution.[1] Van Eyck realized pure detail quite up to the mark of this picture, and in passages needing air tone, or transparency of darkness, considerably further; but Van Eyck could not arrange masses of drapery as these are arranged, still less could he have given all her tigerish strength and cruel waywardness to the couchant cat, or laid in the same grace of languid opalescence the filaments of the peacock's plume. But all this might have been done, and done quite as greatly, in three days instead of three months; and perhaps a higher kind of excellence generally reached by the master, if he thought now more of arrangement and character than of absolute finish. He can never, after bringing himself up to this perfectness, paint carelessly or slightly; but there *is* a chance of his losing the great harmonies of his compositions, and even some of his power over the expression of human features, if he spends too much time on golden fringes and wall mosaics.

I believe the face of the principal figure in this picture is unfinished; at all events, I am quite sure the master will see cause for altering it after his eye has been turned for a

[1] [See above, p. 94, where Ruskin complains that Lewis took Van Eyck for his model, "though he has much of the power of Veronese and Tintoret."]

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little while to other subjects. Both the faces are too grey, and this one is somewhat wanting in retiring shadow, and in distinctness of the sides, so that it looks flat. The cat is wholly magnificent in action, but not quite furry or silky enough in her coat. She looks as if she had put pomade on her fur.

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# NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS[1]

THERE is more sincerity of aim, now, in this body of artists than in the elder Society; though a sincerity which shows itself chiefly in the way which is least interesting—in mere studies and sketches from Nature, not in landscape design nor in figure pieces, so that it is impossible to take note of all the simple though meritorious drawings which have been produced by them this year without wearying the reader by mere repetitions of quiet praise. I can only allow myself the pleasure of referring to one or two principal or characteristic works. I will not go formally round the room, but name them as I remember them.

152. AT PALLANZA: HAZY MORNING. (*T. L. Rowbotham.*[2])

Without bringing forward this drawing as in any wise an example of great art, it yet possesses one character

[1] [The New Society of Painters in Water-Colours was formed in 1831, and reconstructed in 1834. From 1838 onwards the Society was housed at No. 38 Pall Mall, next door to the British Institution. In 1850 it built itself a new Gallery there. In 1863 the Society changed its title to The Institute of Painters in Water-Colours. In April 1882, after some correspondence between the two bodies, the Old Water-Colour Society declined to amalgamate with the Institute; in the following month thirteen of the principal members of the Dudley Society were elected to the Institute. In April 1883 the Institute moved from Pall Mall to its present Galleries in Piccadilly, and in 1884 it became The Royal Institute.]

[2] [Thomas Leeson Rowbotham (1823–1875) was drawing-master at the Naval School at New Cross. Two of his drawings are in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]



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which distinguishes it, to my mind, very honourably from many by masters of more power or pretension. I think Mr. Rowbotham loves the Lago Maggiore, and was thinking of Lago Maggiore and not of himself all the while he was painting. If he makes the blue of the water a little too bright, or the draperies of the houses too gay, it is not so much to make his picture conspicuous, as to reach, if by any means he may, the standard of his own memories of the lovely lake and shining village. And I think this a precious character in work, while it is also a rarer one than we imagine; for it is quite possible to be much more faithful to natural detail than Mr. Rowbotham is, and yet to be faithful only in pride, for the sake of showing how accurate we can be; and then the accuracy, somehow or another, always becomes of no use. It is also quite possible to paint on better principles than Mr. Rowbotham does, and yet to care for nothing but principles all the while; whereas I see plainly that this artist does at heart care chiefly for the misty mountains and the deep lake, and is trying to make us care for them too. Which I think, also, he succeeds in doing very sufficiently. This is very like Pallanza, though it is not everybody who will believe that it is; but Italian lakes are indeed as blue, Italian towers in morning sunshine as white, as these; and when I said just now the blue was too bright, I did not mean it was too pure, but that it was not dark enough. Another time, if Mr. Rowbotham will carry his pier a little deeper down into the water, and show the stones more darkly beneath the increasing blue, he will find the effect is truer; though very good even now. Note the two floating bits of wood at the shallow edge, and the three ranges of the shore-cast weed and shingle—not tide-marks, but evidences that the south-west wind blew warm with rain on the St. Gothard a few days ago, raising the lake's level with soft melting of snow, from which level it has ebbed a little since in these sunny mornings.

Mr. Rowbotham would do well, however, to study the

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laws of reflection in coloured water more than he has hitherto. They are very curious and subtle; and it is quite absurd not to ascertain them, for he has nothing to do but to dissolve a little Prussian blue in water in a white basin, and set a few rose leaves, and tulip leaves, and sticks floating in it, and he may study every change in hue and fantasy of reflection at his ease; afterwards applying the principles he thus ascertains to his boats, and oars, and awnings.

285. THE KABYLE MOUNTAINS AT SUNSET.[1] (*Charles Vacher.*[2])

The rocks and aloe on the left are very beautifully drawn, the tone of the distant mountains most true, and all the effects more delicately felt than hitherto in this painter's work. He bids fair to occupy a separate field in the painting of evening light (compare Nos. 15, 217,[3] etc.), corresponding closely to that which was once occupied by George Robson.[4] But Mr. Vacher should not draw figures; they will waste his time, and distract his attention from parts of his subjects in which he succeeds better.

134. THE UPPER WYE. (*Thomas Lindsay.*[5])

This I remember, because the piece of river bed is so quaintly chosen—so different from anything which sketchers usually stay at. It would be a most poetical subject if well carried out; but Mr. Lindsay's skill is not quite up to the need.

[1] [From the café above Mustapha, Algiers.]
[2] [Charles Vacher (1818–1883) was in 1846 elected a member of the New Water-Colour Society, to the exhibitions of which he was a regular contributor, his subjects being mostly from Italy, Algeria, and Egypt.]
[3] [15. "The Environs of Mesilah: First Hour of Night." 217. "The Vesper Hour, Italy."]
[4] [See Vol. III. p. 193 *n.*]
[5] [Lindsay, member of the "New" Society 1837, made a specialty of Welsh subjects. He died in 1861.]

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108. Trebarwith Sands. (*S. Cook.*[1])

Mr. Cook has a very fine eye for colour, and great understanding of sea. I like all his drawings exceedingly. This seems on the whole the leading one, the rosy sunlight opposing the strength of the green waves very beautifully.

201. San Clemente, Venice. (*J. H. D'Egville.*[2])

Not a very good drawing, but it stays in my memory because it *is* like Venice; and any such likeness is the most difficult thing in the world to find, for Venice always unsettles painters' wits: no place was ever so fit to be painted truly, or so fated to be painted falsely.

190. Early Spring. (*Thomas Sutcliffe.*[3])

Compare 197.[4] Both are very earnest studies; but only to be considered as such, and of too difficult subjects to be quite successful in Mr. Sutcliffe's present stage of power. When a young painter first goes to Nature, he is sure to be charmed by her intricacy in far-away places; and he sets himself to paint what he likes best, not what is best for him. The simpler his choice the better—the door of a cottage, or a rose-bush in its garden, rather than the opening of a glen, or the aisle of a forest.

[1] [Samuel Cook (1806–1859), a regular contributor to the New Water-Colour Society from 1849 to his death. A painter and glazier by trade, he devoted his leisure to sketching. An example of his work is in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

[2] [Elected a member of the Society in 1848; died in 1880.]

[3] [Thomas Sutcliffe, still-life and landscape painter, first exhibited at the Academy in 1856; afterwards constantly exhibited at the "New" Society. He died in 1871.]

[4] [197 had no title, but these lines from Milton's *Arcades*:—

"I'll lead you where you may more near behold
What shallow-searching fame hath left untold,
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,
Have sate to wonder at, and gaze upon."]

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# SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS[1]

It would of course be useless to enter into separate examination of the works produced by this Society at the time when the interest of the public is concentrated on other exhibitions. I sincerely regret this, for many of the drawings which I have had occasion to notice above are entirely inferior in skill, and works of very slight interest or power, compared to the oil paintings in Suffolk Street. Still I should vainly endeavour now to attract attention to them, and can only therefore allude, gratefully for my own part, to the elaborate studies of clear streams and rocky mountains by Mr. Boddington, Mr. Pettitt, and Mr. West. The Nos. 158, 195, 223, 346, 347, 351, and 561[2] were all full of interest and high in merit; the rock-drawing peculiarly good and careful. I had not time to examine them carefully enough to justify me in assigning precedences; only I may say that I liked the last best, for its quiet colour and beautiful setting of the trees on the distant hillsides, as well as the delight evidently felt by the painter in the clearness of the water.

153. "Il Ritorno della Contadina" (*E. Eagles*) was most carefully balanced in tone, and successful in its effect of light —and pretty in thought. Two studies by Mr. Smallfield (737, "Little Peggy," and 760, "An Itinerant Shoeblack") showed very great feeling, and, I hope, promise of high power; and "A Bird's Nest," by Mr. W. Ward (76), was

[1] [The Society of British Artists, in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, was founded in 1823. It became "Royal" in 1887.]

[2] [158. "Waterfall, Romsdal, Norway" (W. West). 195. "Bettws-y-Coed" (J. P. Pettitt). 223. "Llyn Givernen" (H. J. Boddington). 346. "Near Annecy" (J. P. Pettitt). 347. "On the Conway" (W. West). 351. "The Close of an Autumnal Evening" (H. J. Boddington). 561. "Tyn-y-Cae" (W. West).]



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by much the most wonderful example of Dutch sharpness and minuteness of execution that I have seen this year; only Mr. Ward must aim more at getting true relations of shade in his large masses: he loses himself in detail.

In the BRITISH INSTITUTION[1] I cannot forget the marvellous effect of light on snow, and the truthful drawing of its wreaths and icicles, in Mr. Wolf's "Covey" (255). The effect, however, was greatly dependent on distance, and could hardly be seen in the narrow room.

[1] [The British Institution for the Promotion of Fine Art was founded in 1805, and from 1806 to 1863 held yearly exhibitions. The galleries were in Pall Mall, on the site since occupied by the Marlborough Club. The Trustees of the Institution now give scholarships for the assistance of promising art students.]

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# FRENCH EXHIBITION[1]

I DO not like to speak much of the French Exhibition, because there are characters in the work of every nation which need to be long and specially studied before a foreigner can do justice to them; and I have not yet been able to give serious study to the French modern school.[2] Two things, however, must strike every one: the general deadness of colour, associated with softness of outline, which seem to be enforced upon their feeble painters, and delighted in by their stronger ones. I had intended to try to get at the principle of this, to consider what harm or good was in it; but I have been hindered hitherto, and see no hope of my ever getting liberty in that room to think of, or look at, anything but the six pictures of Edouard Frère. There are, I see well enough, one or two consummate pieces by other men: the "Doctor's Visit" (136),

[1] [The "French Exhibition" is an annual exhibition of works of French artists brought together at the French Gallery, 121 Pall Mall. The first exhibition was held in 1854: the Gallery was founded by the late Ernest Gambart, afterwards passing into the hands of the Messrs. Wallis.]

[2] [In his diary of 1856 Ruskin notes on a visit to France (Amiens, September 23)

> "the advance in colour and power made lately by French artists. Muller for sentiment; Couture and Deveria for colour and effect; Philippe Rousseau for animal painting, are all notable; the first three, quite beyond all our best men of the old school."

He admitted "the disciplined power and learning" of the modern French school (Vol. V. p. 331), and its "dexterity" (*Eagle's Nest*, § 89); but lamented its "ignorance of colour" (Vol. III. p. 597); it took, he said, "all the colour out of nature" and left "only the mud" (Vol. XIII. p. 371; see also Vol. IV. p. 212 *n.*). And this darkness was to him the outward sign of "unclean horror and impious melancholy" (*Eagle's Nest*, § 114). Compare *Art of England*, §§ 171, 196.

Charles Louis Muller, pupil of Gros, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, 1849; Thomas Couture (1815–1879), pupil of Delaroche, Legion of Honour, 1848; Eugène Deveria (1805–1865), pupil of Girodet; Philippe Rousseau (*d.* 1888), pupil of Gros, Legion of Honour, 1852. Rousseau is represented at the Luxembourg; Couture and Deveria, in the Louvre.]



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for instance, by Emile Plassan,[1] is as perfect and finished as work or thought well can be; and Trayer's[2] "Convalescent" (155), and several other such, show, in various degrees, a peculiar ease in getting at their point, which makes our English efforts, however successful, look clumsy and forced by comparison. But I cannot tell how I am ever to say what I want to say about Frère's pictures;[3] I can find no words tender enough nor reverent enough. They have all beauty, without consciousness; dignity, without pride; lowliness, without sorrow; and religion, without fear. Severe in fidelity, yet, as if by an angel's presence, banishing all evil and pain; perfect in power, yet seeming to reach his purpose in a sweet feebleness, his hand failing him for fulness of heart; swift to seize the passing thought of a moment in a child's spirit, as a summer wind catches a dead rose-leaf before it falls, yet breathing around it the everlasting peace of heaven;—he will do more for his country if he can lead her to look where he looks, and to love as he loves, than all the proud painters who ever gave lustre to her state or endurance to her glory. What truer glory has she than in these her village children? I cannot choose among such pictures, nor reason of them, though, perhaps, the reader may be surprised at my caring so much for what seems slight in work and poor in colour. But its very poverty and slightness are, in some sort, a part of its beauty: at least, if this painting be imperfect, I have never seen perfect painting do so much; and I believe that only the man who can conceive these pictures knows how he ought to paint them. The beautiful "Student" (61) is, perhaps, the most finished, just because it is the least pathetic; the three other more important ones, the "Luncheon," the "Sempstress," and the "Prayer," are certainly three of the

[1] [Antoine Emile Plassan (*b.* 1817), genre painter, student of Meissonier, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, 1859.]

[2] [J. B. J. Trayer's work is represented in the Luxembourg.]

[3] [The six pictures by Frère, described collectively as "Scenes in Humble Life," were: 58. "The Luncheon"; 59. "The Winter's Morning"; 60. "The Prayer"; 61. "The Student"; 62. "The Sempstress"; 63. "The New Doll."]

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**The Child's Prayer**

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most touching poems that were ever yet written, and, I believe, by far the most lovely ever yet painted, of lowly life. Who could have believed that it was possible to unite the depth of Wordsworth, the grace of Reynolds, and the holiness of Angelico?[1]

The first named of these pictures is the most wonderful; but perhaps the "Prayer" is the one which will be most easily understood, and will best teach the spectator how to enter into the character of the rest. It needs no telling of it; surely it will speak for itself:—the little bare feet kept from the stone-cold by the nightgown which the mother has folded for them, bared of their rough grey stockings, as reverently and as surely in God's presence as if the poor cottage floor were the rock of Sinai; the close cap over the sweet, pointed, playful, waving hair, which the field-winds have tossed and troubled as they do the long meadow-grass in May, and yet have not unsmoothed one wave of its silken balm, nor vexed with rude entangling one fair thread of all that her God numbers day by day; the dear, bowed, patient face, and hands folded, and the mother's love that clasps them close in a solemn awe, lest they should part or move before her Father's blessing had been given in fulness. Return to it, and still return. It should be the last picture you look at in all the year; carrying the memory of it with you far away through the silence of the thatched villages, and the voices of the blossoming fields.

[1] [For a justification of these words, see below, pp. 174, 347.]

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IV

# NOTES

ON SOME OF

# THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF THE

# ROYAL ACADEMY,

THE OLD AND NEW

## SOCIETIES OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS, THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, AND THE FRENCH EXHIBITION.

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*No.* IV.—1858.

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By JOHN RUSKIN, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "MODERN PAINTERS," "STONES OF VENICE," "SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE," "ELEMENTS OF DRAWING," ETC. ETC.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 65, CORNHILL.
1858.



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[*Bibliographical Note.*—Of No. IV. of the *Academy Notes* there has been only one separate edition. The title-page was as shown on the preceding page. An octavo pamphlet of 64 pages. Half-title (with blank reverse), pp. 1–2; title-page (with blank reverse), pp. 3–4; preface (here pp. 147–149), pp. 5–8; text, pp. 9–64. At the foot of the last page is the imprint—"London: Printed by Smith, Elder & Co., Little Green Arbour Court, E.C." No headlines, the pages being numbered centrally. Inserted at the end are sixteen pages of advertisements of books published by Smith, Elder & Co. Issued on May 8, in green paper wrappers; on p. 1 the title-page enclosed in a plain double-ruled frame, the words "Price One Shilling" at the foot below; on pp. 2, 3, advertisements of books published by Smith, Elder & Co.; on p. 4 advertisements of "Mr. Ruskin's Works on Art."

*Reprinted* (1902) in *Ruskin on Pictures*, vol. ii. pp. 123–171.

*Reviewed* in the *Leader*, May 22.

The pamphlet also called forth a skit in *Blackwood's Magazine* for July 1858 (vol. 84, pp. 122–126) entitled "Mr. Dusky's Opinions on Art," with the following motto from *Rejected Addresses*:—

> "I am a blessèd Glendoveer,
> 'Tis mine to speak, and yours to hear."

The skit was by Sir Edward Hamley, who republished it in 1889 in his *Shakespeare's Funeral and Other Papers*, pp. 72–86. Ruskin on being told of the skit wrote to his father:—

> "TURIN, *August* 5 [1858].— . . . As for the *Blackwood*, I am only annoyed because I think you will be a little so; for me the stimulus of a little mean abuse and rascality of that sort is at present rather good; for I have got into slightly too cool a state for writing well in. The drawing is going on very nicely; for *it* requires patience like Hunt's work; but writing sometimes requires *impatience*, and if you send me the *Blackwood* it will be just a nice little spur for me."]

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# PREFACE

In a temperate and candid critique which appeared last year in the *Economist*,[1] and expressed, as I have since found, the feelings of many readers respecting this publication, complaint was made of its imperfection as a record of the art of the season; and it was truly alleged that many pictures of merit were passed without notice, and many of demerit without blame. But the writer surely could not have considered what would be involved in an endeavour to give a complete account of the Exhibitions of the year. If there is any truly original power in a picture—nay, if it shows even any considerable quantity of good work and effort, it takes me at least half an hour to form judgment of it; and if it is a *great* picture, I want the half-hour twice or three times over on different days: and the time so spent is laboriously spent—in finding out as far as I can, first, what the painter is trying for, then in comparing his way of trying for it with this and the other condition of art already existing, and considering what likelihoods of success or error are involved in his present mode of work; determining not so much what the real facts are about the picture, which

[1] [*Economist*, June 13, 1857. "Mr. Ruskin's *Notes* have by this time attained a degree of popularity that renders their verdicts of extreme practical importance to all exhibitors. They are in almost as universal use as the catalogues, and to many must serve as sole guide to the excellences of the yearly Exhibitions. Such success entails great responsibility upon their author. An incomplete and careless review of the pictures is as likely to damage individual artists as an unfair one, and a more elaborate and painstaking critique has therefore become a duty, not only for the sake of the public whom it undertakes to instruct, but also for the artists whom it has the power of drawing into notice." In writing to his father from Switzerland in the following year, Ruskin again referred to this criticism:—

"Bellinzona, *June* 18 [1858].—Fine work I should have in May, instead of walks among the spring blossoms, if I did as the *Economist* would have me at the Royal Academy. Besides, one would get dull with writing so much of the same kind of thing, and then nobody would read at all."]



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I can generally tell pretty soon, as how many of those facts the painter or the public ought to be told. Often a picture of merit is passed without notice, because it has heavy faults which, if I spoke of it at all, it would be necessary to point out in a way which might discourage and harm the painter more than the idea that his picture had been overlooked by chance. Often pictures of great demerit are passed silently, because there is no hope for their painters, and the kind of error they have fallen into may be pointed out quite as usefully in other cases, without multiplying offence. Sometimes I pass over names of great reputation, because my estimate of their work is in opposition so direct to the public estimate of it that such influence as I might otherwise possess would only be weakened by expressing it; and sometimes I permit myself silence about personal friends who are doing the public little harm by their pictures, and whose friendship I should be sorry to lose. But the real and chief reason for my not speaking of such and such pictures is my not having had time to look at them. This pamphlet must, if it is to be useful, be printed within seven or eight days after the opening. Two of those days are needed for press correction and binding; five remain—that is to say, three for looking and two for writing.[1] I can neither look nor write for more than eight hours a day; which, allowing an average of a quarter of an hour to each picture, enables me even to *look* at no more than a hundred out of the thousand in the Academy; and the first choice of this hundred, out of which those to be written of must be finally chosen, of course depends, in some degree, on accident: the eye is often caught by something bright or energetic, with semblances of right, and it takes a minute or two to make quite sure there is nothing in it—and many minutes in the aggregate are thus lost; or a noble and quiet picture may have got entangled in a company so contemptible that one passes it in a fit of indignation about its

[1] [See above, Introduction, p. xxii.]

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neighbours. But all this is unavoidable; nor is it to be regretted. It is precisely this losing sight here and there of a really good picture which permits me to lose sight also of the bad ones, when it is desirable to do so—nobody knowing whether the picture has been disliked or overlooked. Take the pamphlet simply for what I stated it to be in the preface to the first that was issued—a circular letter to my friends about the pictures that most interest me in my first glance at the Exhibition—and it will be found serviceable; view it in any other light, and it will be wholly inefficient. Its value consists only in being trustworthy as far as it reaches; and guiding safely, though not guiding everywhere. I trust that I shall not often overlook any truly great and consummate picture; but it is better to lose sight of ten than to pass false judgment on one; and I strive so to look and so to write, that the repentances which must necessarily follow all hurried work may be of my silences only, not of my words.

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# EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

THE Academy walls present us this year with much matter for curious speculation, or rather for careful and earnest forecasting of the probable course of our schools of art in this their transitional stage of effort. Accidentally, there are no leading pictures, and the rooms are filled with more or less successful works by the disciples of the Pre-Raphaelite school, which, as I stated five years ago it would,* has entirely prevailed against all opposition; sweeping away in its strong current many of the opposers themselves, whirling them hither and thither, for the moment, in its eddies, without giving them time to strike out; and tearing down in its victory a few useful old landmarks, which we shall have to build up again by-and-by. But the main question forced upon our thoughts this year is the result of the new modes of study on minds of average or inferior power. For what was done in the first instance by men of singular genius, under intense conditions of mental excitement, is now done, partly as a quiet duty, partly in compliance with the prevalent fashion, by men of ordinary powers in ordinary tempers—resulting, of course, not in brilliant, but only in worthy and satisfactory work; respecting which commonplace completeness there are several points of interest for our consideration. For a year or two considerable disappointment may be felt by the disciples of the new school. Conscious in themselves of an entire change in their modes

* Edinburgh *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 136 [Vol. XII. p. 160].



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of thought, and a vigorous advance in powers both of sight and execution, they will be necessarily mortified to find that the advance is unrewarded by distinction; that their pictures, which before were unnoticed in the midst of others as wrong, are now unnoticed in the midst of others as right; and that they have become no more conspicuous in reformation than they were in heresy. There is, however, this comfort for them (without counting the comfort in the mere consciousness of being right, whether noticed or not), that the kind of painting which they now practise is capable of far more extended appeal to the popular mind. The old art of trick and tradition had no language but for the connoisseur; this natural art speaks to all men: around it daily the circles of sympathy will enlarge; pictures will become gradually as necessary to domestic life as books; they will be largely bought—though little wondered at; the painter will have to content himself with being as undistinguished as an author, and must be satisfied in this unpraised usefulness.

Secondly, the pictures of the rising school will in a few years be much more interesting than they are now. In learning to work carefully from Nature, everybody has been obliged to paint what will stay to be painted; and the best of Nature will not wait. Moreover, a subject which must be returned to every day for a couple of months must necessarily be near the house door; and artists cannot always have their lodgings where they choose: many of them, unable to quit their usual residences, must paint the best thing they can find in their neighbourhood; and this best accessible bit, however good as a study—(anything will do for that)—will usually be uninteresting to the public. The evil is increased by affectations of Wordsworthian simplicity; also by a good deal of genuine simplicity; and of more or less foolish sentiment. Formerly, when people were forced to draw by rule, and were never allowed either to think or feel, we were at least untroubled by foolish thoughts and weak feelings; now, when the rage is for

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sentiment, and everybody is encouraged to tell us all that is in or near their hearts, we must not be surprised to find that naïveté may sometimes be tiresome as well as formalism, and the exaggeration of sensibility as offensive as the pedantry of science. The compensation is in this case greater than the evil: we are sure that whatever thoughts or passions truly possess the painter, will be truly expressed by him; while in old times they would have been silenced or constrained. The extent of these two adverse influences, however, is curiously shown in the present Academy. Because it is necessary to paint on successive days from the same object, in order to realize it to perfection, we have hardly a single interesting sky in the whole gallery—Mr. Dillon's sunset on the Nile (273) and Mr. E. W. Cooke's at Venice (557)[1] are almost the only pictures of merit which acknowledge the existence of clouds as a matter of serious interest — and because the humblest subjects are pathetic when Pre-Raphaelitically rendered, the two pieces most representative of the school in the rooms are both of stone-breakers: one (Mr. Brett's) of a boy hard at work on his heap in the morning, and the other (Mr. Wallis's) of an old man dead on his heap at night.[2] Taking which facts in their full significance, it is pleasant to think what this new school of ours will do when it once gets fairly to work on materials worth its while. Here we have literally only experiments and early lessons: trials of strength on fragments of landscape in serene weather; quiet little mill-streams and corners of meadows, slopes of sand-hills, farmyard gates, blackberry hedges, and clumps of furze. But what shall we say when the power of painting, which makes even these so interesting, begins to exert itself, with the aid of imagination and memory, on the splendid transience of Nature, and her noblest continuance; when we have the courses of

[1] [273. "Emigrants on the Nile." 557. "Sunset on the Lagune: San Giorgio in Alga and the Euganean Hills in the distance."]

[2] [1089. "The Stonebreaker." See below, p. 171. 562. "Thou wert our Conscript." See below, p. 170.]

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heaven's golden clouds instead of squares of blue through cottage casements; and the fair river mists and mountain shrouds of vapour instead of cottage smoke—pine forests as well as banks of grass, and fallen precipices instead of heaps of flints. All this is yet to come; nay, even the best of the quiet, accessible, simple gifts of Nature are yet to come. How strange that among all this painting of delicate detail there is not a true one of English spring![1]—that no Pre-Raphaelite has painted a cherry-tree in blossom, dark-white against the twilight of April; nor an almond-tree rosy on the blue sky; nor the flush of the apple-blossom, nor a blackthorn hedge, nor a wild-rose hedge; nor a bank with crown-circlets of the white nettle; nor a wood-ground of hyacinths;* no, nor even heather, and such things of which we talk continually. Nobody has ever painted heather yet, nor a rock spotted richly with mosses; nor gentians, nor Alpine roses, nor white oxalis in the woods, nor anemone nemorosa, nor even so much as the first springing leaves of any tree in their pale, dispersed, delicate sharpness of shape. Everything has to be done yet; and we must not think quite so much of ourselves till we have done it, even though we have got to be so profoundly moral that we make everybody who looks at our work the wiser for it. We must take care not always to make them sadder also. Indeed, I look with deep respect and delight on the steady purpose of doing good, which has thus in a few years changed the spirit of our pictures, and turned most of them into a sort of sermons;—only let it always be remembered that it is much easier to be didactic than to be lovely, and that it is sometimes desirable to excite the joy of the spectator as well as his indignation.

* That is to say, so as to bring out their beauty for a principal subject. Mr. Inchbold painted some wood hyacinths and gentians, but too few, and half hidden in a litter of other flowers. Mr. Oakes painted a beautiful lichened rock, but obscured with furze and rubbish—not brought out in its power. [See above, pp. 96 and 115.]

[1] [For some remarks on this criticism, see above, Introduction, p. xxiv.]

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What, however, I have to say this year of particular pictures will cast itself, to my regret, a little into the form of carping; for now that nearly all are careful and well-intended, there is no possibility of praising the universal care, or describing the universal intention; while, on the other hand, there are no leading pictures of the class that silence fault-finding, but several which just miss of being leading pictures, owing to faults which it therefore becomes a duty to find. I hope it will be understood that in my statement of these blemishes, I do not in general fix upon them because the picture in question has more faults than others, but because its merits make them more to be regretted.

18. Old Holland. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

Certainly there is no cause for regret here; Mr. Stanfield never painted a more delightful picture, or one showing more of his peculiar power. The fish are unusually beautiful both in line and colour.

29. The Bluidy Tryste.[1] (*J. N. Paton.*)

I regret the prevailing gloom which at present characterizes this artist's work; art may face horror, but should not dwell with it. The greatest painters habitually have chosen cheerful or serene subjects; and if Mr. Paton will paint them more frequently, he would feel the real power of a frightful one more, when there is need for him to paint it. There was, I believe, such need in the case of his other

[1] [The subject was explained in the catalogue by the following passage:—
"Alack, proude Ladie, quoth the Knycht, I spake bot in jeste; and thou hast alone the trewest lover that ever lovit woman; for never—so God me help—loved I none other but thee. And so he died. . . . Sche streikit him straught in the rath blumis, ever making him heavy dole; and alaick, quoth sche, living I livit bot for thee, and ded I will for thee die. And so she departed thence; and towards eventyde came to our Ladie's Priory, and there made sche confessioun, and was straight assoylit, and mekely receivit her Saviour. And, whenas complinis was sung, her heavy hert brast in sondir, so that al weipit to see. . . . And they layed their bodies in one graff."—*The Harte and the Hynde*, boke xii.]

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picture, "In Memoriam,"[1] it having been designed at the time of the fit of miserable public weakness which had like to have checked the doing of judgment and justice on the Indian murderers;[2] but there was no need, as far as I can see, or feel, for the defilement of this sweet dell with guilt; at least, unless it had been done more solemnly. The dead body is far too well dressed; no one can be sorry that there is an end of the coxcomb; he might have been far more gallantly dressed for his tryst without being so fine. Then Nature ought to have had more observance of him—the sun ought to have fallen here and there upon his face—yes, and upon his blood; and the hue of the leafage round him should have had, it seems to me, the deep sympathy through all its innocent life which is felt in those words of Keats—

> Saying, moreover, "Isabel, my sweet,
> Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
> And a large flint stone weighs upon my feet;
> Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
> Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheepfold bleat
> Comes from beyond the river to my bed."[3]

Many readers thought it a mere piece of flippancy when I said, respecting Mr. Paton's beautiful picture of the "Home," that he ought to paint nothing for some time to come but apricots and peaches.[4] It was, on the contrary,

[1] [471. A scene from the Indian Mutiny—the interior of a dungeon, where captive white women and children are confined, expecting the nameless horrors of a cruel death, when they are released by the Highlanders, who burst into their prison. In the picture, as originally exhibited, the place occupied by the Highlanders was filled with Sepoys. For a criticism of this modification, and on Sir Noel Paton's work generally, see pp. 206–212 of *The English School of Painting*, by E. Chesneau, whose criticism (says Ruskin) "my pupils may accept as my own" (*Art of England*, Lecture iv.).]

[2] [The reference is to the Governor-General's Proclamation of July 1857, which gained for him the name of "Clemency Canning," and met with as much favour in some quarters as hostility in others (see Greville's *Memoirs*, 1852–1860, ii. 127). In December 1857 Sepoy rebels were blown from the guns. Ruskin in such cases favoured strong measures, as, for example, in the case of Governor Eyre: see *Time and Tide*, § 116.]

[3] [*Isabella*, xxxviii.]

[4] [See above, p. 50. Ruskin's remark there had especially enraged the critic of the *Guardian*, who wrote: "There is a lovely picture by Mr. Paton, called *Home*, which we have gazed at with heart and eyes fuller than we should care to confess, except

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a quiet statement of a true necessity. Mr. Paton will not learn what is wanting to his mode of painting until he practises colour from simple objects, in the realization of which emotion can have no share. This foreground is, of course, painted with intensest care and perfect draughtsmanship; there is more natural history in it than in most others in the rooms; the little pinguicula alpina on the left, the oxalis leaves in the middle, the red ferns, and small red viper on the right, are all exquisitely articulated as far as form goes; but they are painted without enough mystery or change of colour. It will be necessary for this painter to make colour his main object for some months, and to paint the leaves thoroughly well on a large scale before he reduces them to foreground magnitude; but the way he has executed the girdles of the two figures, the piece of bank above the knight's head, and that just under his breast, between it and the bugle, proves him to be capable of all perfection.

59. Fairy Tales. (*W. C. T. Dobson.*)

It would be difficult to improve the sweet earnestness of the little face, or the conception of the whole attitude. I merely pay tribute of admiration in passing, having had my say about Mr. Dobson's colour before.[1] His larger picture, 446, is very interesting in the new conception of Ishmael—the boy, against whom was to be the hand of all men, kissing his father's hand, and receiving his blessing.[2] What a difference between this and the vile Guercino of Milan, in which Abraham scolds them out of the tent—Hagar crying because she has no chance of another "place."[3]

anonymously, in print. Mr. Ruskin has a single sentence of general praise for it, and then proceeds—'Mr. Paton has, however, a good deal yet to learn in colour . . . apricots and peaches.' If any man can go and look at Mr. Paton's picture, and then think of this sentence without a feeling of indignant contempt, all we can say is, he is very differently constituted from ourselves."]

[1] [See above, pp. 68, 114.]

[2] [Genesis xvi. 12.]

[3] [For a similar description of the Guercino in the Brera, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 203).]

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But Mr. Dobson is, I think, wrong in his idea of Sarah. She may, indeed, for all that is recorded of her, have been a hard and commonplace woman; but there was nothing in her sending away Hagar at this time to prove that she was, and it would have been nobler to have conceived her as more sorrowful, and hesitating in her cruelty.

79. ATHALIAH'S DISMAY AT THE CORONATION OF JOASH (2 Kings xi.; 2 Chron. xxii., xxiii.). (*S. A. Hart, R.A.*)

I fear I must leave this, and its correspondent picture of the "high art"[1] school, Mr. Poole's Lear (310),[2] to the admiration of the *Athenæum*,[3] which, with great felicity of expression, declares the Lear to be under a "gloating, delicious light," and the Athaliah to be "of the highest order of Jezebel beauty." Jezebel's beauty, however, needed some painting before she tried its effect when her life hung upon it, and I fear that Athaliah's beauty must have stood in need of some such help at this period of her age. Has Mr. Hart actually painted this large picture without inquiring how old the queen or her grandson were? or does he seriously mean the figure of Joash to represent a boy only seven years old, and that of the queen to represent a wicked Eastern woman of seven or eight and forty?—for Athaliah could not be less; her son was three-and-twenty when the arrows of Jehu overtook him by Ibleam,[4] seven years before. But the *Athenæum* is too severe upon Mr. Hart, in its observation that "the dull vacant face of Joab is rather a blot"; for, as Joab at this time had been dead just a hundred and forty-two years, it was likely his face would be vacant.

[1] [On this phrase, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 19 *n.*).]

[2] ["The Death of Cordelia: from the last Act of *King Lear*"—now in the South Kensington Museum. P. F. Poole, *b.* 1807, R.A. 1860, *d.* 1879.]

[3] [*Athenæum*, May 1, 1858. "Mr. Poole's picture is full of a sort of gloating and exquisite light, which is neither moon, star, or sun light." "Athaliah's beauty is of the finest Jezebel order."]

[4] [2 Kings ix. 27.]

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101. A KIBAB SHOP, SCUTARI. (*J. F. Lewis.*)

My first impression is that this very notable picture shows the labour in it too clearly, but I cannot judge of it in haste. The animal life is nearly perfect; the kid making up its mind to butt the pigeons is especially delightful. 122, however, is a more consummate example of the painter's work; and 245, though at first it looks uninteresting, will be found very wonderful on quiet examination. His gift of grace in arrangement of line is best seen in the fall of the red drapery of No. 51.[1] But I hardly know what is the matter with me this year, for I find Mr. Paton's pictures too dramatic, and Mr. Lewis's not dramatic enough. He has thirty-one figures in all upon the walls, and all the drama to be got out of the whole number is the arrangement of a nosegay and the presentation of a cup of coffee. Perhaps those who delight in the gloomier pictures of the present exhibition may be able to excite themselves into some interest in this last event, by supposing the coffee to be poisoned.

There is, however, one point which ought specially to be noted respecting Lewis's work—it is always and wholly original. When, some time ago, I claimed him as a Pre-Raphaelite,[2] I never meant that he had been influenced in his practice by any of the other members of that school; but that he was associated with it, as ten years ago I showed that Turner was,[3] and as all true painters for ever must be, by the mere fact of their painting truth instead of formalism or idealism; while Lewis is still more closely connected with the present nominal masters of the school by his completeness of finish to the utmost corners of his

[1] [122. "An Inmate of the Hareem, Cairo." 245. "Interior of a Mosque at Cairo: Afternoon Prayer." 51. "Lilies and Roses, Constantinople." Nos. 122 and 51 were bought by Ruskin's father: see below, p. 180.]

[2] [See *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851), § 27 (Vol. XII. p. 363).]

[3] [It was not "ten years ago," but three, that Ruskin had specifically claimed Turner as "the first and greatest of the Pre-Raphaelites": see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting* (1855), § 134 (Vol. XII. p. 159).]

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canvas. But he was not led to this finishing by Hunt or Rossetti. There never, perhaps, in the history of art was work so wholly independent as Lewis's. He worked with the sternest precision twenty years ago, when Pre-Raphaelitism had never been heard of—pursued calmly the same principles, developed by himself, for himself, in the midst of all adverse influences in Rome, and through years of lonely labour in Syria. In all those years of Eastern light, he wrought with Nature only for his master: he cannot have seen so much as one good picture from the time of his leaving Rome until his return to England. And all our discoveries here, and all our talking and quarrelling about them, have been nothing to John Lewis—as they were nothing to Turner. There is not another picture in all this Academy which I believe to have been painted wholly without reference to the Pre-Raphaelite dogmas: they are either directly or distantly imitative; either cautiously recusant or vigorously defiant. But John Lewis paints as he would have painted had no such school, no such dogmas ever existed; and that girl would still have been there, and she would still have had the same exquisite glow in her face, the same delicate light in her eyes, and the same finished tracery of gold on her robe, though Pre-Raphaelitism had been strangled ten years ago in its birth, and all the painters in Europe had now been daubing like Haydon or Benjamin West.[1]

119. SUNDAY EVENING. (*T. Webster, R.A.*[2])

Mr. Webster is quite delightful both in this picture and 334 ["Grace before Meat"]. I never remember seeing the expression of a child, at once full of affection and mischief,

[1] [For Haydon, see Vol. XII. pp. 129–130; for another reference to West (1738–1820), P.R.A., see below, p. 330, and Vol. X. p. 125, Vol. V. p. 125 *n.* Ruskin was perhaps here thinking of the description of West in Byron's *Curse of Minerva*—"Europe's worst dauber, and poor Britain's best."]

[2] [Thomas Webster (1800–1886) was constant, during a long artistic career, to the same style of domestic genre. For another reference to him, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 49). His work is well represented in the Tate Gallery and South Kensington Museum.]

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so delicately and perfectly touched as in this little disturber: one sees so well that the house never can be quiet for her, except when she is asleep; and holds no other joy so dear as that disquiet.

200. The Maid of Derwent. (*H. H. Emmerson.*)

A promising average example of the kind of study from Nature which fills the rooms, and of which it is impossible to mark the other instances specially. This is better balanced in effect than most, and looks as if good work would come of it.

204. The Missing Boat: Pas de Calais. (*Frank Stone, A.*)

Very good in much of its expression, and thoroughly careful, but too much elaborated in the studio, and not quite enough on the beach. It is got up too primly, as the principal figure is in her fishwife's dress. Sorrow, and salt water, after six hours' stand on the shingle, don't leave a woman's dress quite so tidy.

218. The Derby Day.[1] (*W. P. Frith, R.A.*)

I am not sure how much power is involved in the production of such a picture as this; great ability there is assuredly—long and careful study—considerable humour—untiring industry,—all of them qualities entitled to high praise, which I doubt not they will receive from the delighted public. It is also quite proper and desirable that this English carnival should be painted; and of the entirely

[1] [Now in the Tate Gallery, No. 615. For various particulars about the picture, see E. T. Cook's *Popular Handbook to the National Gallery* (British School). For other references to it by Ruskin, see his letter of Feb. 2, 1880, "On the Purchase of Pictures," in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, i. p. 82; and the letter of June 10, 1880, on "A Museum or Picture Gallery," in *On the Old Road*, 1885, i. § 501; both reprinted in a later volume of this edition.]



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popular manner of painting, which, however, we must remember, is necessarily, because popular, stooping and restricted, I have never seen an abler example. The drawing of the distant figures seems to me especially dexterous and admirable; but it is very difficult to characterize the picture in accurate general terms. It is a kind of cross between John Leech and Wilkie, with a dash of daguerreotype here and there, and some pretty seasoning with Dickens's sentiment.

216. At a Farmhouse in Surrey. (*G. P. Boyce.*[1])

Full of truth and sweet feeling. How pleasant it is, after looking long at Mr. Frith's picture, to see how happy a little girl may be who hasn't gone to the Derby!

273. Emigrants on the Nile. (*F. Dillon.*[2])

Pelicans to wit; and many thanks to Mr. Dillon for giving us some idea of the wonderful aspect of the bird in flight: we must certainly have it carved so in a cusp or gargoyle in the Oxford Museum.[3] The transitions of glowing colour, from the nearer ground to the sunlit horizon, are far finer than anything Mr. Dillon has yet accomplished. The drawing of the palm-trees seems admirable.

284. The Nativity. (*A. Hughes.*)

Quite beautiful in thought, and indicative of greater colourist's power than anything in the rooms; there is no

[1] [George Price Boyce (1826–1897), best known as a water-colour painter, originally studied architecture, but a meeting with David Cox at Bettws-y-Coed in 1849 determined him to the choice of painting. He was an intimate friend of Rossetti; and though not a member of the P.R.B., the movement had much of his sympathy (see a passing reference to his work in the *Notes on Prout*, below, p. 434). He was for many years one of the principal members of the Old Water-Colour Society.]

[2] [Frank Dillon (*b.* 1823), landscape painter; member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours.]

[3] [The Oxford Museum was at this time being built by the architects Woodward and Deane. Ruskin, who had taken a leading part, with Sir Henry Acland, in advocating the adoption of their Gothic design, was also interesting himself in the carvings and other decorations: see *The Oxford Museum* in Vol. XVI.]

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other picture so right in manner of work, the utmost possible value being given to every atom of tint laid on the canvas. I happen to know that it was hastily finished, in an afterthought; and I am sorry to see that the painter has been fatigued to the point of not seeing how far he had failed in some parts of his purpose. He had another picture perfectly finished—and, though a little grotesque in fancy, exquisitely beautiful—"The King's Garden:" why has he not sent that?*

It is quite possible that, in this nativity, thoughtless people may be offended by an angel's being set to hold a stable lantern. Everybody is ready to repeat pretty verses from Spenser about angels who "watch and truly ward,"[1] without ever asking themselves what they look out for, or what they ward off; everybody is also ready to talk about ministering spirits,[2] so long as it is not asked what ministry means. Perhaps they might even reach to a distinct idea of such practical ministries on the part of angels as warding off a bullet from their son in India, or leading him to a spring when he was thirsty. But they cannot conceive that highest of all dignity in the entirely angelic ministration which would simply do rightly whatever needed to be done —great or small—and steady a stable lantern if it swung uneasily, just as willingly as drive back a thunder-cloud, or helm a ship with a thousand souls in it from a lee shore.

* The absence of the other Pre-Raphaelite leaders from their posts is highly to be reprobated. They have no business to set themselves to work which they can't finish in proper time. Every year, at this season, the moment they have seen the effect of their pictures on the public, every one of them should go into the country, and before the long days are half over each of them should have painted one picture of moderate size for next year: let them lock that up, and resolve not to look at it again till they see it on the Academy walls. Then set themselves to whatever perennial labour they choose to undertake, resting from it always about Easter, so as to be quite fresh to begin their regular Academy work again in May.[3]

[1] ["They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward."—*Faerie Queene*, book ii. canto viii. 2.]
[2] [Hebrews i. 14.]
[3] [Mr. Hughes exhibited "The King's Garden" in 1859. See p. 232.]

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300. WEARY LIFE. (*R. Carrick.*)

A notable picture; very great in many respects, but with grievous faults. The two principal figures are quite right—more especially the child; nothing can be more beautiful than the way it lies, nothing much better than the painting of it; and the thought of the whole singularly pathetic. But that thought is only half developed. I am amazed that a painter of Mr. Carrick's sincerity should allow himself in the conventionalisms of this design. What light is this that is cast on the two sleeping figures—morning?—evening?—noon? All suppositions are alike negatived by those trees in the background, which are in the deepest twilight; the rick under which the figures rest is also in darkness; and thus, for a mere effect of stage illumination on his foreground, the painter has lost all the pathos which there would have been in the calm of long, low sunshine on the solemn fields; or in the dew of the morning upon their peace—after the theatre's fantastic nocturns. The whole value of the background, as a space for informing incident, is also lost. No story is told by the dull trees. I will not take away Mr. Carrick's freedom and pleasure in invention by offering any suggestion as to the incidents that might occupy that background, but assuredly it ought not to be empty. Besides all this, the wonder of the peasant woman is vulgarly told—her gesture at this moment is highly improbable. She could not have approached so near the figures without seeing them before; unless we suppose her to have walked backwards, which indeed she might have done in raking: but the gesture has an unnatural and theatrical look for all that; and her face is utterly without expression. When there are only three figures in a picture, we must not make a nonentity of the nearest.

And lastly, the painting is throughout too hard; the straw especially is far too much defined. Has Mr. Carrick never looked carefully at the straw in the first picture which

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showed the beauty of it—the "Dove Returning to the Ark"[1]—in which not a single stem was entirely defined, and yet all was real. It needs to be constantly kept in mind by all painters, that good painting must be reserved as well as expressive—it withholds always as much as it reveals. All mystery, or all clearness, is equally wrong, though clearness is the noblest error. Nature is simple, and therefore intelligible; but she is also infinite, and therefore mysterious. Whenever you can make a bit of painting quite out, that bit of it is wrong. There is no exception to this rule.

The picture is, however, so beautiful, in spite of all these defects, that it beeomes almost the duty of the painter to perfect it.[2]

### 326. A Pastoral.[3] (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

Exquisite in idea, and some qualities of colour, as Mr. Hook's pictures are always; but by no means better than what he did last year, and if not better, then necessarily a little worse. Pause is, I believe, not possible in art. It is a pity thoughts so beautiful should not be entirely realized: this is, at best, but a full and suggestive sketch. It is not the way to paint a dog, nor a woman's arm, nor a sky.

453 ["The Coast Boy gathering Eggs"] is again entirely right and beautiful in conception, but imperfect in touch. There is a peculiar truth in the way he has given the deep tone of the colour of the sea, out of which the surf opens upon the rocks, like a great light, the snowy glare and roar coming at the same instant.

[1] [The picture by Millais exhibited in 1851; one of those bequeathed by Mr. Combe to the University Gallery at Oxford. Ruskin had noticed the picture in his letters to the *Times* in 1851: see Vol. XII. pp. 323, 325.]

[2] [Which the painter accordingly did; see the anecdote told above, Introduction, p. xxv.]

[3] [Illustrated in the catalogue by two lines from Spenser's *Shepheards' Calender*:—

"Then blowe your pypes, shepheards, til you be at home;
The night higheth fast, yts time to be gone."]

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350. Flower Girls—Town and Country. (*J. C. Horsley, A.*)

The boldest effort we have yet seen from Mr. Horsley's hand, and I think a very telling one. It is another example of the moralizing tendency of the art of the day; but if Mr. Horsley makes his ladies going to masquerades look so charming in their gay dresses, I fear they will continue to wear them, in spite of poor flower-girls leaning against the gate-pillars, or innocent examples of life in the country.

372.[1] (*A. L. Egg.*)

As I see that several mistakes have been made in the interpretation of this impressive picture in the public prints, I give the true reading of it, though I should have thought it was clearly enough legible. In the central piece the husband discovers his wife's infidelity: he dies five years afterwards. The two lateral pictures represent the same moment of night a fortnight after his death. The same little cloud is under the moon. The two children see it from the chamber in which they are praying for their lost mother; and their mother, from behind a boat under a vault on the river-shore. The painting, as such, is not first-rate; but the purpose of the picture is well reached, and the moonlight is true and beautiful.

428. Past and Present. (*Miss A. Blunden.*)

There is not a more painstaking nor sincere piece of work than this in the room; though it is clearly the work of a hand which has not yet gained its full strength. The figures are far from satisfactory; but there are pieces of the old manor

[1] [The picture was given no title in the catalogue, but the following extract was printed in explanation:—
"August the 4th. Have just heard that B—— has been dead more than a fortnight, so his poor children have now lost both parents. I hear *she* was seen on Friday last near the Strand, evidently without a place to lay her head. What a fall hers has been!"]

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house and foreground thoroughly felt, and very nearly got right—much righter in general tone of colour than is usual in early work so far carried. The picture is very curious in its quantity of work, and well worth a long stoop to it.

422. THE GAOLER'S DAUGHTER: A SCENE FROM THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. (*P. H. Calderon.*[1])

The figure of the imprisoned priest is perfectly right and beautiful: the girl nearly so, but the child ought to be repainted; it spoils a very touching picture. Mr. Calderon had a promising little interior picture in the British Institution.[2]

485. THE DUCAL PALACE, VENICE. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*)

As this seems to be a definite and energetic protest by Mr. Roberts against Turner's idea of Venetian colour, and against all that I have endeavoured to urge or describe in support of that conception, I can only accept it as such, and pass it by;[3] but I may at least say that protests against

[1] [Philip Hermogenes Calderon (1833–1898) was elected A.R.A. in 1864, R.A. in 1867, and appointed Keeper in 1887. A picture by him, exhibited in 1891, which excited much attention at the time, is now in the Tate Gallery (No. 1573, "The Renunciation of St. Elizabeth of Hungary").]

[2] [No. 144. "Far Away."]

[3] [See below, p. 220, for further criticism of Roberts' Venetian pictures; and for an anecdote regarding these criticisms, above, in the Introduction, p. xxix. Ruskin saw the artist at work in Venice in 1851, and predicted that no great things would result. He wrote to his father:—

"*29th September* [1851].— . . . I saw David Roberts to-day; what you say of him is very true. But Venice has been used to all kinds of libels, and must put up with it. Nobody could draw her but John Lewis.

"*23rd October.*—Mr. Roberts left us last night at half-past nine to go to Trieste and home by Vienna. He is hurried away from *Venice* to go to paint the *Great Exhibition* for the Queen. However, Venice does not lose much. He has been what he calls sketching, and brought me his books to look at last night. He sketches the Ducal Palace this way [very rough sketch], and says it is quite enough. How he is ever to work up his sketches I cannot imagine—however, I am rather an unfair judge, for I am morbidly accurate; but it just shows what a man comes to, when he draws for the *Exhibition* only—and then they affect to despise the Pre-Raphaelites. I am the more sorry to see him failing in this way, for he is thoroughly kind, upright, and good-natured—upright at least in all but pretending to draw things when he does not."]

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gondoliers' management of their boats are not likely to be effective.[1] No gondolier can by any possibility get into any one of the positions here supposed, more especially that of the figure on the left. A gondola is rowed from a little elevated deck, with a raised slope for the hindmost foot, close at its stern, not near the felze (canopy), and at his fullest thrust forward the rower's position is well over the boat's side on his left hand; so that if he missed his stroke, he would go head-foremost into the water on that side, without even touching the felze: the certainty of which result renders a tyro's first efforts with the stern oar exceedingly interesting—as well as the no less precise certainty that if he catches a crab (and fish of this species may be easily secured on a windy day), he must go instantly into the water over the stern.

499. Reynard's Glove. (*Miss A. F. Mutrie.*)

Very pretty, indeed, Miss Mutrie, as usual; but you know those are perfect dwarfs of foxgloves. Bud, bell, and seed, I counted one hundred and forty-eight on one stem last summer (under the last crag of the Ochils that looks to Stirling),[2] and an average foxglove that has at all enjoyed its life will always have seventy or eighty. One energetic fellow I saw near Inverness, who had not indeed enjoyed his life, but had grandly made the best of it; he had been broken down in his youth—his head laid down hill, past all rising again: but he had lost no courage, thrown out three upright shoots from the side of his stem, and become three foxgloves instead of one.

500. Daughters of the Alhambra. (*J. Phillip, A.*)

All Mr. Phillip's work is able, and, to a certain extent, right; but I think he has never again done anything so

[1] [Compare some further remarks in the *Notes* of 1859, p. 220; and compare Vol. XIII. p. 116.]

[2] [Ruskin was in Scotland with his parents, Aug.–Sept. 1857. See *Præterita*, iii. ch. i.; *Two Paths*, § 1; and *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, i. 214.]

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good as his picture of the church door two years ago.[1] He is losing refinement; while his Spanish ladies—and still more his Spanish lovers—seem to me all somewhat more Phillippian than Castilian. This picture is, however, a good example—rich, and pleasantly composed.

526. THE WARREN. (*J. W. Oakes.*[2])

Exquisitely painted in the flowery centre; but of all foregrounds, one of sand and bent grass least pays labour: and why does Mr. Oakes concentrate his strength on foregrounds only? He had a beautiful barley-field in the British Institution—with butterflies on it, and some nice furze and thistles besides; but a great deal more of them than was wanted; while the distance was wholly crude and unsatisfactory.

528. PEACEFUL DAYS. (*P. R. Morris.*[3])

Very beautiful, and easier in mode of laying colour than most of the work of the year.

557. SUNSET ON THE LAGUNE. (*E. W. Cooke, R.A.*)

I can answer for the truth of this study, representing one of the calm sea-glories of Venice, which painters are too apt to despise, though poets never.[4] Both Shelley and Byron seem to have loved these Euganean Hills and the sunsets behind them more than Venice herself.

[1] [See above, p. 58.]

[2] [John Wright Oakes (1820–1887) was a member of the Liverpool Academy, and his subjects were chiefly found in Wales. There is a small picture by him in the South Kensington Museum. He was elected A.R.A. in 1876.]

[3] [Philip Richard Morris (1835–1902) is best known to the present generation by his pretty portraits of women and children. At an early period, when he had come under the influence of Holman Hunt, he was looked upon as one of the most promising of the coming men. He was elected A.R.A. in 1877.]

[4] [The picture was of San Giorgio in Alga with the Euganean Hills in the distance. Plate 15 in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii., is from a drawing by Ruskin of the same scene:

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562. "THOU WERT OUR CONSCRIPT."[1] (*H. Wallis.*)

On the whole, to my mind, the picture of the year; and but narrowly missing being a first-rate of any year. It is entirely pathetic and beautiful in purpose and colour; its only fault being a somewhat too heavy laying of the body of paint, more especially in the distant sky, which has no joy nor clearness when it is looked close into, and in the blue of the hills that rise against it, which is also too uniform and dead. All perfect painting is light painting—light at some point of the touch at all events; no half inch of a good picture but tells, when it is looked at, "None but my master could have laid me so."

The ivy, ferns, etc., seem to me somewhat hastily painted; but they are lovely in colour, and may pass blameless, as I think it would have been in false taste to elaborate this subject further. The death quietness given by the action of the startled weasel is very striking.

see also Plate A in Vol. X. of this edition. Shelley's description of sunset, as seen from this point, is in *Julian and Maddalo*:—

> "Half the sky
> Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry,
> Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew
> Down the steep West into a wondrous hue
> Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent
> Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent
> Among the many folded hills: they were
> Those famous Euganean Hills."

Byron's description is in *Childe Harold*, canto iv., stanzas 27, 28. Ruskin describes these hills as seen from Venice—"blue islands of Paduan hills, poised in the golden west"—in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. ix. § 1; see also ch. i. of vol. ii. of *The Stones of Venice*, for sunset "behind the belfry tower of the lonely island church, fitly named 'St. George of the Seaweed.'"]

[1] [The reference is to the chapter on the dignity of labour in *Sartor Resartus* (bk. iii. ch. iv.):—

"Hardly entreated brother! For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed; thou wert our conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee too lay a God-created form, but it was not to be unfolded; encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of labour; and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom."]

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854. THE RIVALS, FROM CLYNNOG BEACH. (*C. F. Williams.*)

The magnificent sketch by Landseer in this room,[1] showing, as it does, all his wonderful handling on the boldest scale, must withdraw all eyes at first from the lower walls. But when due honour has been done to the deer, this careful and unpretending study deserves a minute's stooping to it, admirable as it is alike in rendering of extent of wet sand, weedy shingle, and breaking wave; and then it would be well to cross to 609,[2] which, though not an altogether successful effort, is a most earnest one to render the mingling of transparency with reflection in pure and perfect sea. Who ever dreamed of painting sea like this till now? and yet that is simply the normal state of sea. What we have been in the habit, taught by the Dutch, of calling sea pieces ought to be called merely mud-bottom pieces.

1089. STONEBREAKER.[3] (*J. Brett.*)

This, after John Lewis's, is simply the most perfect piece of painting with respect to touch in the Academy this year; in some points of precision it goes beyond anything the Pre-Raphaelites have done yet. I know no such thistle-down, no such chalk hills, and elm-trees, no such natural pieces of far-away cloud, in any of their works.

The composition is palpably crude and wrong in many ways, especially in the awkward white cloud at the top;

[1] [No. 800. "Deerstalking."]

[2] ["Anstey's Cove, South Devon," by H. Anelay.]

[3] [This picture, now in the possession of James Barrow, Esq., is reproduced in Mr. P. H. Bate's *English Pre-Raphaelite Painters*. It was bought during the exhibition. "I am exceedingly glad," wrote Ruskin to his father (Bellinzona, June 22, 1858), "Brett has sold his picture, for he is a fine fellow as well as a good painter. I hope he will do some beautiful things at Sallenches." John Brett (1832–1902), who first made his mark, by the pictures noticed here and below (p. 234), as a painter of landscape on Pre-Raphaelite principles (see below, p. 434), afterwards became better known as a sea-painter. His "Britannia's Realm" is in the Tate Gallery (No. 1617). To a catalogue of an exhibition of works by him in 1886 he prefixed some accounts of his methods and of his careful "finish." He was elected A.R.A. in 1881. Ruskin refers to him as "one of my keenest-minded friends" in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 24. See also *The Art of England*, § 8.]

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and the tone of the whole a little too much as if some of the chalk of the flints had been mixed with all the colours. For all that, it is a marvellous picture, and may be examined inch by inch with delight; though nearly the last stone I should ever have thought of any one's sitting down to paint would have been a chalk flint. If he can make so much of that, what will Mr. Brett not make of mica slate and gneiss! If he can paint so lovely a distance from the Surrey downs and railway-traversed vales, what would he not make of the chestnut groves of the Val d'Aosta! I heartily wish him good-speed and long exile.[1]

[1] [Brett went to the Val d'Aosta in the summer of this year (1858). Ruskin was at Turin at the time, and discussed with the painter the picture he was engaged upon (see below, p. 238 *n.*). Ruskin's visit has a memorial in his description of the Alps from Turin ("Inaugural Lecture at Cambridge," Oct. 1858, reprinted in Vol. XVI. The result of Brett's visit was exhibited in the next year's Academy.]

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# FRENCH EXHIBITION

GENERALLY, this Exhibition is full of interest, and instructive to our English painters in the evidence of steady training shown in its work. It is dominant in scenes of domestic life; deficient in landscape.

## 7. THE PLOUGH. (*Mdlle. Rosa Bonheur.*[1])

This lady gains in power every year, but there is one stern fact concerning art which she will do well to consider, if she means her power to reach full development. No painter of animals ever yet was entirely great who shrank from painting the human face; and Mdlle. Bonheur clearly *does* shrink from it. Of course, a ploughman ploughing westward at evening slouches his hat and stoops his head; but the back of him, in this action, with a foreshortened yoke of oxen, and three of the awkwardest

[1] [Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899). The "Horse Fair" was exhibited at the Salon in 1853, and afterwards in London. A repetition of it, now in the National Gallery (No. 621), was the first work by a living foreign artist to be admitted there. Ruskin made Rosa Bonheur's acquaintance when she was in England in 1856, staying with Gambart, the dealer. Frederick Goodall, who was present on one occasion when Ruskin was dining with her, thus records the conversation. "'After he had seen most of her studies of Highland cattle, he asked, 'Why don't you work in water-colours, for if you did you could, with a very fine sable brush, put in every hair in your studies.' Her answer was, 'I do not paint in water-colour, and I could not; it would be impossible to put in every hair; even a photo could not do it.' 'If you come and dine with me some day,' he retorted, 'I will show you a water-colour drawing—made in Scotland—in which I put in every leaf of a tree in the foreground.' By and by, when she spoke of the Old Masters, of Titian, and especially of the Entombment of Christ, he only remarked, 'How wonderful the little flowers in the foreground are painted!' I felt at the moment that she took the larger view of art. Mr. Ruskin continued, 'I do not see that you use purple in your shades.' 'But,' she said, 'I never see shade two days alike, and I never see it purple.' 'I always see it purple,' and he emphasised it, 'yes: red and blue.' After Mr. Ruskin took his leave, Gambart asked her opinion about him. 'He is a gentleman,' she said, 'an educated gentleman; but he is a theorist. He sees nature with a little eye—*tout à fait comme un oiseau*'" (*Reminiscences of Frederick Goodall*, 1902, p. 130).]



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haystacks in France, do not altogether constitute a subject for a picture. In the "Horse Fair" the human faces were nearly all dexterously, but disagreeably, hidden, and the one chiefly shown had not the slightest character. Mdlle. Bonheur may rely upon this, that if she cannot paint a man's face, she can neither paint a horse's, a dog's, nor a bull's. There is in every animal's eye a dim image and gleam of humanity, a flash of strange light through which their life looks out and up to our great mystery of command over them, and claims the fellowship of the creature, if not of the soul. I assure Mdlle. Bonheur, strange as the words may sound to her, after what she has been told by huntsmen and racers, she has never painted a horse yet. She has only painted trotting bodies of horses.[1]

62. The Gleaner Boy. (*Edouard Frère.*)

The expressions of admiration for this painter's work which I used last year were thought by many readers to have been written in a fit of momentary and uncalculating enthusiasm. I repeat therefore—after a year's deliberation—with such plain and purposed meaning as I always try to give words which I know will seem questionable, that this painter unites "the depth of Wordsworth, the grace of Reynolds, and the holiness of Angelico."[2]

That is to say, first, he approaches the simplest subject with perfect feeling of its great humanity, conscious of all the most solemn pathos which there is in the crowned sorrows of poverty and calm submissions of toil—interpreting to the full, and for the first time in the history of

[1] [Ruskin reverts to this criticism in a letter to his father, written after reading a book on Horse Taming:—

"Turin, *August* 19 [1858].—Among the many things which pleased me (I shall forget to say this if I don't say it at once) was the testimony it bore to that peculiar fineness of make, and subtlety of spirit in the horse which I think Lewis has expressed so exquisitely and Rosa Bonheur missed so ignorantly—'a single harsh word will raise a nervous horse's pulse ten beats a minute.'"]

[2] [See above, p. 142, and below, p. 347.]

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sacred paintings, the great words of the first Beatitude.[1] For the poverty which was honoured by the great painters and thinkers of the Middle Ages was an ostentatious, almost a presumptuous poverty: if not this, at least it was chosen and accepted—the poverty of men who had given their goods to feed the simpler poor, and who claimed in honour what they had lost in luxury; or, at the best, in claiming nothing for themselves, had still a proud understanding of their own self-denial, and a confident hope of future reward. But it has been reserved for this age to perceive and tell the blessedness of another kind of poverty than this; not voluntary nor proud, but accepted and submissive; not clear-sighted nor triumphant, but subdued and patient: partly patient in tenderness—of God's will; partly patient in blindness—of man's oppression; too laborious to be thoughtful—too innocent to be conscious—too long experienced in sorrow to be hopeful—waiting in its peaceful darkness for the unconceived dawn; yet not without its own sweet, complete, untainted happiness, like intermittent notes of birds before the daybreak, or the first gleams of heaven's amber on the eastern grey. Such poverty as this it has been reserved for this age of ours to honour while it afflicted; it is reserved for the age to come to honour it—and to spare.

I said, secondly, that this painter had "the grace of Reynolds"—that is to say, grace consummate, no painter having ever before approached Reynolds in the rendering of the momentary loveliness and trembling life of childhood, by beauty of play and change in every colour and curve. The great Venetians were too great to do it; their lines were always grave and severe in their grace; and all other men but Reynolds have been too mean to do it, until this one.

And, lastly, I say he has the holiness of Angelico—that is to say, perfect purity from all sensual taint, from all baseness of associated ideas, there never passing over his

[1] [Matthew v. 3. The blessing on "the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven" is often quoted by Ruskin; see, for instance, the preface on *Usury*, § 4; *Munera Pulveris*, § 56 *n.*; and *Aratra Pentelici*, § 139.]

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brow so much as the shadow of an Evil Spirit's wings. This I say of him; and also that the man of whom this may truly be said is, if he uses his power faithfully, simply and briefly one of the chief men of this century. But on his faithfulness to the gift of his deep heart all now rests; and he is at present failing in this faithfulness. I noticed last year[1] that there were certain characters in his painting which, in any other man's work, would have been faults, and which were only to be forgiven in him so far as they were unavoidable in getting his main result. Now this year the main result is not better—is not even quite so good; and the faults are more conspicuous, proving themselves therefore faults positive. The colour even of the faces is less pure; that of the background is becoming dark and heavy; it is difficult to see even as much as the painter intends us to see: we feel as if there were a coating of clay over the work which wants to be washed off. This manner of painting will assuredly gain upon him, unless he sets a standard to himself far beyond it; and I believe he will have to paint some pieces of still life, in which no question of feeling or of harmony of expression will interfere with his efforts, up to the highest point of finish possible to him, for exercise merely: afterwards receding from the precision and brilliancy he does not want when he uses such passages in his pictures. Take, for instance, the piece of near grass in this "Gleaner": it, of course, in no wise resembles grass; not a leaf of it is true, nor is it lovely; it is merely an indication of the thing meant, in a tone harmonious with the rest of the work. Now the painter ought not only to see more in the grass than this, but ought to be able to paint more, without hurting his general effect.* So, also,

* The reader may perhaps be surprised at my speaking here somewhat in the tone of one of the men of the old "generalization" school—about subduing parts for the effect of the whole. But this is because I do not consider Frère's as finished pictures, but as sketches of expression. In a finished picture all must be finished; and in a sketch all must be sketched, up to an harmonious point—nothing beyond that point. Frère's faces are

[1] [See above, p. 142.]

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in the corn which the boy carries, there is none of the beauty or complexity of a real cluster of wheat; and if the artist would draw the real sheaf perfectly, he would be able to make the number of touches he has permitted himself here, quite as subordinate, but far more lovely. The sadness of colour which he chooses is indeed a part, and a very important part, of the pathos of his subjects; but he must take care not to allow melancholy to sink into ennui, nor humility to degenerate into dulness.

I take no separate note of the other pictures by him in this room, for I believe the persons who can feel them at all will feel them without being much talked to about them; only it should be observed generally that the greatness of Frère consists in such slight things that it is only by long looking at his work that it can be felt. The difference between him and all other painters of similar subjects is quite infinite; and yet it depends literally on hairbreadths, and less than hairbreadths—on the ineffable subtlety of line which makes gesture or expression precisely *right*. Examine, for instance, the way the child leans on her sister, pushing a little to get at the shells in her lap, in No. 59,[1] and consider how it is that all the child's mind is given in its attitude—all its fitful, troublesome, innocent, inconsequent eagerness, just in the turn of a sleeve!

not finished; he seems to pause just when he has touched the truth of expression, lest he should lose it by doing more. Then, of course, the accessories must not be finished in a higher degree; he must be content with the expression only of those—as with the expression only of the human face. The rule I gave for finished pictures is a perfectly true one—namely, that if you paint faces ill, you must not try to mend them by painting backgrounds worse;[2] but it is also a true rule, that if you sketch a figure lightly, you must not finish the burden it carries heavily, nor give a completion to the lesser thing which you have refused to the greater. The picture, No. 63, is, however, very nearly up to his mark of last year. The hair of the child is beautifully touched.

[1] [The editors are unable to identify all the pictures referred to in the French Exhibition of 1858. The British Museum does not possess the catalogues, nor is there a copy of the 1858 issue at the Gallery itself.]

[2] [See above, pp. 55, 118.]



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108. Sea-Shore at Blankenburg: Afternoon. (*Henri Le Hon.*)

Very clever in the balanced depressions of tone which bring out the gleams of light on boat and sea, and showing, I think, great feeling and skill in the painter; but this depression of tone is, nevertheless, a standing mistake of the French school. The French painters always chill the colours of Nature as they lower them, by toning everything with grey; and thus not only alter the depth and pitch of the colour, but the colour itself. They do not merely change its key, but debase its nature,—that is to say, if they have trees to lower, they turn what is in reality pale *pure* green into dark *dirty* green, when they ought to change it only into a darker green of the same purity; and if they have pale yellow sand to lower, instead of lowering it to a dark yellow, equally glowing, they lower it to a dark grey, and thus turn sand into slime. It is very curious, that in spite of all the talk about Titian, this simple principle of his colouring has never been understood. When Titian lowers tones, he always lowers them without changing the colours.[1] Pale blue he translates into ultramarine, pale rose-colour into crimson, pale sand-colour into deep brown, and pale green into emerald green; but he never pollutes the blue sky with blackness, nor stains pale roses with clay: whereas, nearly all the French landscapes in this room represent Nature seen through a smoked glass. If the sky had only been half as livid at the last eclipse of the sun as the French landscapists represent it on sunny afternoons, the birds would have gone to roost in a much more satisfactory way than I hear they did.[2]

[1] [For the importance Ruskin attached to this principle, see above, Introduction, p. xxvii.]

[2] [The reference is to the total eclipse of the sun early in the afternoon of March 15, 1858. The astronomers and newspapers had furnished accounts of what ought to have been seen, and work was generally neglected in order to witness so rare a phenomenon. But the afternoon proved cloudy and very little was seen. "The phenomena

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108. THE STUDY. (*Louis Ernest Meissonier.*[1])

I look upon this work and its companion (109)[2] with exceeding sorrow, for they show great powers wasted in producing results either useless or worse than useless, in so far as they encourage the disposition of the modern patron—so long fatal to the best interests and highest purposes of art—to spend his wealth in petty luxuries of the drawing-room, instead of in the bold and large art which is visible to all men, and helpful to all men. I have never in any wise joined in the vague cry raised usually by ambitious and weak painters, for public encouragement to "high art," or "historical art," as if art might not be both high and historical on a small scale as well as a large one.[3] But, on the other hand, I have always protested, in the strongest way I could, against the miserable degradation of pictures, by the influence of the Dutch schools, into toys for boudoirs, or marvels for cabinets.[4] And here is the old Dutch principle again in all its strength. Narrow, easily imitated, easily appreciated chiaroscuro, let in by a single window, to get dioramic relief—brown shadows—bright touches—dull surfaces—coppery colours; all Flanders and Holland over again. Quite as good as ever Holland did—nay, it seems to me, in some respects, better; but assuredly quite as wretched, as forgetful of the high purposes of painting, and as traitorous to the royalty of human nature.

which accompanied the eclipse were equally disappointing. At the period of greatest obscuration, the darkness did not exceed that of a gloomy afternoon. Animals and birds seemed very little discomposed by the early accession of twilight. . . . It was somewhat amusing to hear the angry remarks of the populace at their disappointment" (*Annual Register*, 1858, pp. 44–45).]

[1] [Louis Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891), the most famous "small master" of France. In the Wallace collection there are sixteen examples of his work. One of his Napoleon series ("1814") was at one time in Ruskin's collection: see pp. 381, 438, 447, in this volume.]

[2] ["The Courtier."]

[3] [See, *e.g.*, *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. pp. 49–52).]

[4] [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. viii. § 2.]

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### 180. The Music Lesson. (*Emile Plassan.*)

Exquisite in touch of pencil, and in appreciation of delicate character, both in features and gesture.[1]

It is lighter and softer in laying of colour than Frère's work, and more refined in colour than Meissonier's; on the whole, it seems to me the best piece of quiet painting in the room. The French painters far surpass us in their understanding of the light expressions and trivial actions of daily life; partly because they aim at them more simply, and are content to be true and polished, while our painters are always striving to be heroic, moral, or amusing; but also, I suppose, from an innate tact and sympathy which we never have possessed—nor can possess.

### 189. Marguerite at the Fountain. (*Ary Scheffer.*[2])

As this picture is designed on the assumption that the universe generally is vulgar, and that the noblest ideal of colour is to be found in dust, it of course puts itself beyond criticism. But it suggests a curious question. It may be —I believe it is—a just view of the depth and purity of

[1] [This picture, as also Lewis's "Inmate of the Hareem" (see above, p. 159), was bought, without his son's knowledge, by Ruskin's father, who recorded the event in a letter to Professor Norton, dated May 31, 1858: "It is long since I have bought a picture (my son going sufficiently deep into the luxury), but I was tempted by three small ones at the first glance—Plassan's Music Lesson, French Exhibition; Lewis's Inmate of the Hareem, R. Academy; Lewis's Lilies and Roses, R. Academy. I did not tell my son I had bought the first till his *Notes* were printed—not that it could bias him, but it might have cramped his critique. When his *Notes* were out I told him the picture was his, and I was glad he had spoken, say written, so well of it. As the *Times* calls the Inmate of the Hareem a masterpiece of masterpieces, and the *Spectator* styles it a marvellous gem, it is a pretty safe purchase. I had it at home before the public saw it" ("Letters of John Ruskin—II.," edited by Charles Eliot Norton, *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1904, vol. 93, p. 801).]

[2] [Ary Scheffer (1795–1858) was by birth Dutch, by residence and training French. His well-known picture of "St. Augustine and St. Monica" is in the Tate Gallery (No. 1170). For another reference to him, see above, p. 114. In a letter, written to E. S. Dallas about 1860, Ruskin somewhat mitigates his judgment on Ary Scheffer. "Though one of the heads of the Mud sentiment school, he does *draw* and *feel* very beautifully and deeply" (*Letters on Art and Literature*, p. 38, privately issued 1894, and reprinted in a later volume of this edition).]

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Marguerite's character, which assumes that the first whispers of her companions would not flush her face but turn it pale. But, supposing the painter should ever wish to paint a woman "glowing all over noble shame,"[1] how will he reconcile the human crimson with the dusty insensibilities of his background?

[1] [Ida in Tennyson's *Princess* (vii.). Ruskin again uses the quotation in his address on "The Value of Drawing" to the St. Martin's School of Art (see Vol. XVI.).]

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# SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

**84. Borromean Islands on the Lago Maggiore (?). (*J. B. Pyne.*[1])**

I am sincerely glad to see that Mr. Pyne has succeeded in reaching better qualities of colour than in his earlier pictures. I had feared the range of his work had been limited by natural incapacity for the perception of hue; but he begins to disprove such incapacity, and it seems to me quite at his own choice whether he will now become a real artist, or remain merely a popular draughtsman and supplier of the market with "lake scenery." It is at his own choice, I repeat—but only at his resolute choice; for he has much to surrender of his own, and much to learn from the external world. His own part in the conception of this No. 84, for instance, is somewhat too manifest, and highly curious. The picture appears to represent an inlet of green water among desolate rocks, somewhere near the North Pole; the faint, pure, frosty, Arctic light penetrating into their jagged hollows; a shore of grey slime, washed down from the glaciers, stretches into the shallow water of the inlet, on which tongue of land (at the right hand of the spectator) Mr. Pyne has erected a small model of an Italian campanile and some clay houses. On the slope of the hill

[1] [James Baker Pyne (1800–1870) published in 1853 "The English Lake District," and in 1859 "The Lake Scenery of England." In 1842 he was admitted a member of the Society of British Artists, and for some years he was its Vice-President. The South Kensington Museum has some of his pictures, and the Tate Gallery one (No. 1545). In the first volume of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin had regretted that "this clever artist appears to be losing all sense of colour, and is getting more and more mannered in execution, evidently never studying from Nature except with the previous determination to Pynize everything" (Vol. III. p. 479). An interesting appreciation of Pyne is given in W. J. Stillman's *Autobiography of a Journalist*, vol. i. ch. vi.]



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above he has carried his bitterness of mockery of any lost navigator to the extent of setting up some pillars as they usually stand in the alleys of vineyards, and arranging some copper foliage upon them, having a resemblance to vine leaves, distant indeed, but yet clear enough to be very painful to persons suffering from cold and hunger. It is true there is some Iceland moss in the foreground—(is it not slightly too brown for that lichen?); and his malice towards his fellow-men is tempered by some kindness for animals, since, by raising an island traversed by alternate terraces and slopes, in the middle of the lagoon, he has provided for the exercise and amusement of the white bears, who, it is well known, are fond of sliding down small slopes of this kind on their hind-quarters.

If Mr. Pyne is determined to paint these Arctic desolations, he would find that their real incidents were in the end more interesting, though less startling, than these grotesque introductions of Surrey-garden decoration; but I do not see why he should confine himself to Northern subjects. Among the Italian lakes, to one of which this very Polar scene bears (except in the forms of the mountains) so singular a resemblance as to have caused, I presume, the mistake in the catalogue, he would find materials which, though at first much more difficult to treat, would, in the end, reward his labour with a richer charm: shores dark with ilex and soft with olive are surely pleasanter than slimy shallows; and the Alps of the Simplon, soaring through their twelve thousand feet of air, purple with everlasting pines, are better worth painting than these little crags jutting out of the pools of the glacial sea, and hardly high enough to catch a few of the level rays of the revolving sun upon their lichenless edges.

Seriously and heartily, I am sorry for Mr. Pyne: his work has now become well worth sorrow. I never knew before that he cared for rosy lights and blue shadows, or could feel that there were other forms in the world than those of Mendip limestones. But I see here that he can,

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and that he is only shutting himself wilfully away from the beauty that he might delight in. All these scenes of fairy-land, which he supposes can only be got by fallacy, exist in truth—exist in tenderness and loveliness, greater than he has any dream of—greater than he could at present conceive possible. But between them and him lies a fiery trial. His work, clever though it be, is at present wrong to the very core, so fatally has he blinded himself to the great facts of the earth. If he could bear to have this false work and the false principles involved in it fairly burnt away—burnt to their foundations—and, after humiliation in their ashes, will paint steadily for six months from things quiet in colour and commonplace (as he will at first suppose) in form—solemnly resolving to allow himself neither a fallacy nor an avoidable incompletion; and having done this penance, will then seek again some of his favourite scenes, he will find a new world opened to him, from which he will never desire to wander more.

115. MOZART'S LAST CHORUS. (*J. Morgan.*)

Not a good picture; but very touching in its subject,[1] and I think successful—(is it not? for musicians must be judges in this)—in the principal figure.

188. THE WINDINGS ON THE WYE. (*H. J. Boddington.*[2])

I am puzzled by the pictures of this class which the Society produces so abundantly. There are this year about fifty in the room of nearly equal average value; some are

[1] [Thus described in the catalogue: "It was evening. Mozart, ill and fatigued with working at his 'Requiem,' was delighted by a friend who came and told him that one of his operas was being performed at the theatre. His friend returned from time to time to report the progress they made. The composer, following the music in his own mind, at length became so excited, that he begged of each of his friends to take their part; had himself propped up in bed by his wife, Constance Weber, and led off in what proved, but too truly, his last chorus."]

[2] [Henry John Boddington (1811–1865) was one of the sons of Edward Williams, and changed his name because so many of the family were painters.]

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a little richer in blue than others—some a little warmer in brown; a few, Mr. Syer's chiefly—(201, for instance[1])—are more dexterous and light in touch than the rest; and one or two, like this 188, more ambitious in size and subject: but they may all be classed together as imperfect studies from pleasant mountain scenery, dependent for effect chiefly on redundance of rock forms and opposition of warm light to purple shade, with occasionally considerable tenderness of atmosphere—well studied reflections in water, and sharply touched sticks and stones in the foreground. Nevertheless, I do not look upon them as done by recipe. There is evidence in all of them that the painters have worked much out of doors, and have faced midges and wet weather many a long day before they could either get into those dexterous habits of rock-drawing, or give definite portraiture of all the rock basins in a torrent bed—as Mr. Pettitt has done in 189.[2] Moreover, I really think they love the hills: those elaborate pieces of mountain flank, touched with amber, look to me as if they were painted quite for love—not to speak of many pretty stones and cottages, and streams with foam on them, and even bubbles—yes, and for the first time, as far as I recollect, bubbles with colour (699).[3] But there is one fatal wrong in all of them, which is simply that nothing is *quite* right. The whole is respectable; but no single stone, no wreath of cloud, no cottage gable, is absolutely, decisively, insuperably good.

They are wrong, also, by having always too much of the same kind of thing: too much bank—all alike; too many rocks—all alike; each piece of the picture undoes another, and nobody ever feels inclined to ask for more.

Then, further, there are no strange things in them. Nature always looks strange when she is truly rendered, and is always doing what none of us expect from her. These painters never seem to get any out-of-the-way

[1] ["Mill near Aber, North Wales."]
[2] ["The Studio, Foss Novyn, on the Conway."]
[3] ["Otter Hunting at Pont-y-Pare, Bettws-y-Coed," by J. P. Pettitt.]

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glimpses, or to catch one of the humours of the clouds in a wayward day. There was a little green bit of sunshine on the wet grass in the British Institution (234, C. Leslie),[1] which had far more sight in it than any of these large pictures, though sharing with them the last fault I have to name—overloading and too smooth laying of colour. Half as much paint would have produced a result twice as good. Titian would put glow into a whole head with no more paint than goes to one of the touches on these foregrounds.

252. A Fisherman's Daughter of Mola di Gaeta. (*F. Y. Hurlstone.*[2])

Is it too late for Mr. Hurlstone to recover himself? He might have been a noble painter. Bad and coarse as it is, that bright fish is the best piece of mere painting in all the rooms; and I believe, if Mr. Hurlstone would set himself fairly to take account of his own work, he might yet feel how fast he is sinking. If he would but look some morning for half an hour steadily and closely at that piece of Thames slime, stained with dim gouts and blotches of vermilion, which he has given in the place of a left hand to the fisherman's daughter; and then walk straight into the National Gallery, and look for another half-hour at the drooped left hand of the princess—holding her crown—in Veronese's picture,[3] I do believe he might yet be seized with desire to recover his ground;—and this desire, in him, would be capacity.

454. The Wife's Remonstrance. (*J. Campbell, jun.*)

By far the best picture in the Suffolk Street rooms this year; full of pathos, and true painting. But I fear Mr.

[1] ["A Break in the Clouds after the Storm."]

[2] [Frederick Yeates Hurlstone (1800–1869), was President of the Society of British Artists from 1835 until his death. His pictures were mostly historical in subject.]

[3] ["The Family of Darius," No. 294: see above, p. 118.]

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Campbell is unredeemably under the fatal influence which shortens the power of so many of the Pre-Raphaelites—the fate of loving ugly things better than beautiful ones. In his "Visit to the Old Sailor" (800), he has painted the rugged face well, but quite spoiled the child's. He ought to repaint the child's face; the rest of the drawing is worth any pains he could spend on it.

788. Roast Chestnut Seller. (*F. Smallfield.*)

An interesting and successful study, as are also several other drawings by this artist in this room. But he seems to me to be imitating William Hunt's execution, without thoroughly understanding the motive of it. If he does not see things rough, he should not paint them so: in No. 716 ["The Woodman's Boy"] the blue sleeve looks like worsted work, not like painting. He has, however, two excellent studies in the Royal Academy (33, 877).[1]

[1] [33. "The Strange Gentleman." 877. "The May-Gatherer."]

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# NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

18. THE BASS ROCK. (*J. W. Whymper.*[1])

A most interesting subject, truly seen, and well rendered up to a certain point. There is no high power of present execution shown in it; but I think the painter must have great feeling, and perhaps even the rare gift of invention. Those bird-clouds are well wreathed and tossed, so as to show the noble form of the rock. I hope this painter may advance far.

63. BARDJ. AÇOUSS.[2] (*Charles Vacher.*)

There is great beauty of tone in many of Mr. Vacher's drawings, and their impression is often most pleasing; but he should really leave out the figures for some time to come, exercising himself in figure-drawing in the meanwhile; and also he needs to study individual pieces of foreground with more respect for their local colours. He is working too much by recipe, and the nearer stones are here very meagre.

111. THE RISING OF THE GROUND SEA: TREBARWITH, CORNWALL. (*S. Cook.*)

This is a drawing full of merit and feeling for sea; but there are five others by this artist in the room, and in all

[1] [Josiah Wood Whymper (1813–1902), was elected an associate of the New Society in 1854, and a full member in 1857. He was a master of the craft of wood-engraving, among his pupils being Charles Keene and Frederick Walker.]

[2] [Part of the Roman Walls, from near the Valée Gate, Constantine, Algeria.]



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of them there is a green sea under a slight breeze, breaking on a flat shore. The sea thus represented six times over is indeed very like salt-water, and the waves shake well along their edges, giving more suggestion than usual of the tremulousness which so often runs in a kind of electric current along the whole length of a breaker's edge as it rises. But I sincerely hope Mr. Cook will make some effort to break from this slavery to one kind of wave. He might teach himself and us a serviceable lesson by resolving, on the first morning of summer, when there was a likelihood of unsettled but not stormy weather during the day, to go down to the beach as soon after dawn as possible, and make a rapid sketch of the exact aspect of sea and sky at every two hours, as the day passed on, until sunset; afterwards trying to realize each with complete sincerity, and sending the nine drawings as a series to the next exhibition. He would find they attracted more notice than these repetitions of green breakers. 309[1] is, however, very lovely.

### 114. The Bay of Naples. (*T. L. Rowbotham.*)

What I said of Mr. Rowbotham's work last year[2] I must take leave to repeat, for I do believe there is the making of a good landscape painter in him. I think, in spite of all his artificialness, he has enthusiasm—loves what he tries to paint, and works hard; and where there is enthusiasm, and no shirking of labour, there is no saying what a painter may make of himself if once he takes the right turn of the road. Of the merely blottesque[3] workman I have far less hope. He is often more right, as far as he reaches, than the enthusiastic one; but there is no growth

[1] ["The Serpentine Rocks, Kynance Cove, Cornwall."]
[2] [See above, p. 135.]
[3] [For Ruskin's earlier use of this term, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. pp. 100–102).]

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in him. Mr. Bennett,[1] for instance, perhaps looks out of his green shades with contempt on Mr. Rowbotham's white and blue, as feeling that he is simpler in heart and truer in purpose. But then he purposes nearly nothing—loving fields and trees only with a serene, vegetative affection; whereas if Mr. Rowbotham but once takes a fancy to finish one of his pretty subjects fairly on the spot—nay, if he but draws so much as the window of an Italian cottage completely—his mind will be altered about many matters before the sketch is well dry; and then all his admiration of rocks and lakes may be brought into good service. At present it is sufficiently sad to see him defrauding himself of the very picturesqueness he delights in, by painting out of what he supposes to be his head, but is, in reality, only his habit. He knows well enough, as well as I do, that those trios of similar windows (compare 130)[2] are not particularly interesting; but he does not yet know that they are also impossible, and that there are the most delightful window groups to be had every day, and in every place, merely for the trouble of looking at them and noting them down.

182. Song of the Georgian Maiden.[3] (*H. Warren.*[4])

Full of cleverness; but continually false in passages, owing to the violent striving for brilliancy. I do not dwell upon the errors, because so dexterous an artist must surely know them well enough himself, and I suppose, therefore, he means, for the sake of dazzling, to persist in them.

[1] [William Bennett (1811–1871) is believed to have been taught by David Cox. He became a member of the New Water-Colour Society in 1848, and was a constant exhibitor. He was also in request as a teacher. There is a good drawing by him in the Tate Gallery (No. 1722). He was represented in the Exhibition of 1858 by nineteen drawings, mostly of fields and trees. For another reference to his "quiet and correct studies," see *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 599 *n.*).]

[2] ["Cetara in the Gulf of Salerno," by T. L. Rowbotham.]

[3] [Illustrating Moore's "Light of the Harem."]

[4] [Henry Warren (1794–1879) was President of the New Water-Colour Society from 1839 to 1873. He had originally studied sculpture (in the studio of Nollekens); then took to oil-painting, first exhibiting at the Academy in 1823; and afterwards adopting water-colour, became a member of the Society in 1835.]

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207. In the Forest of Dean. (*Edmund G. Warren.*)

A very interesting study. The dark side of the trunk is singularly consistent and right in its gradations; the effect of the whole as true as it is possible for anything to be which is not delicately coloured, but depends for all its results on mere brown, grey, and green, laid in right chiaroscuro.

I fear the success is mechanical; but I wish that the younger Pre-Raphaelite painters, who cannot yet bring their details into true balance of force, would take note how much appearance of truth to Nature has been obtained in this drawing merely by the consistent relations of its shade, and would try to give the same consistency to their own truer hues.

218. Noah—A Miracle Play.[1] (*Edward H. Corbould.*[2])

An amusing subject, which would, however, have been more intelligible if Mr. Corbould had quoted some of the text of the play. I recollect reading it with great edification one wet day at Chester, some ten years ago; but I remember now only the heroic determination of Noah's wife, and the less heroic resolves of her gossips, expressed as follows: I cannot answer for the spelling:—

*Three Gossips.*—Here is a pottle full of Malmsey, gode and stronge,
Tho' Noe thynke us never so longe,
Yet we will drink alyke.

*Noah's wife.*—Yea, Noe, set up your sayle,
And row forth with evylle hayle.
But I love my gossippes, each one.
One foote further will I not gone;
They shall not drown—*by Saint John,*
And I may save their lyffe.
But thou shalt let them into that kist,
Els, row forth, Noe, where thou list,
And gette thee a new wyf.

[1] [Performed in the streets of Hull in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the catalogue were quoted various items from the MS. Book of Expenses of the Play.]

[2] [Edward Henry Corbould (*b.* 1815), a constant exhibitor at the New Water-Colour Society since 1837; many of his pictures are in the Royal collections. In 1851 he was appointed to instruct the Royal Family in drawing. For another reference to Mr. Corbould, see Vol. XIII. p. 400.]

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228. A Study in Winter, Adel Moor. (*T. Sutcliffe.*)

The furze in this drawing is admirable, and the whole thing got straight from Nature; but Mr. Sutcliffe chooses his subjects ill, owing, I believe, to his not working enough in chiaroscuro merely, and allowing himself to be captivated by a single pretty bit, like those golden brambles on the purple rock, without considering whether the forms and arrangement of the whole are available. He should now study for some time with a view to arrangement only.



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# OLD SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

I CONGRATULATE the Society on its great advance this year. I have placed my notes on their drawings last, because it is pleasant to stay latest with old friends.

### 15. SNOWDON FROM CAPEL CURIG. (*D. Cox.*[1])

Though Mr. Cox's work is every year broader in handling, and therefore further, as mere work, from the completeness I would generally advocate, it becomes always more majestic or more interesting in conception. I have deeper sympathy with some of his this year's drawings than with any I ever yet saw from his hand. This is a rich and beautiful one; but the bits please me most which no one but he would have thought of painting, and which are made pictures of by a little thing in the right place, as 178 ["Going to Market"] is by the black and white dog. The bank above, and distance, are wonderful pieces of grey colour.

[1] [David Cox died in the year following this Exhibition, aged seventy-six. Ruskin's eulogy of him in the first edition of the first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843) had been as follows: "David Cox, whose pencil never falls but in dew—simple-minded as a child, gentle, and loving all things that are pure and lowly, content to be quiet among the rustling leaves, and sparkling grass, and purple-cushioned heather, only to watch the soft white clouds melting with their own motion, and the dewy blue dropping through them like rain, so that he may but cast from him as pollution all that is proud, and artificial, and unquiet, and worldly, and possess his soul in humility and peace." Cox's handling became broader in his later period, as mentioned by Ruskin in these *Notes*, and he defended the "loose and blotted handling" as appropriate to his object (*Modern Painters*, vol. i., Vol. III. pp. 193–195). For a later and less favourable notice, see *Lectures on Landscape*, § 80. See the references in Vol. III. p. 46 *n.*]



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29. Gates at the Villa Sommariva,[1] Lake of Como. (*W. Evans.*[2])

The drawing cannot be called good; but there is a new idea and vision of Gates in it, and it is therefore very noteworthy. But what does Mr. Evans mean by this coarse way of work, with so much odd good, and so much odd wrong, in it? 57,[3] for instance, has a great deal of good —and the violent wrong of vertical reflections of oblique lines, which spoils all; and 10[4] is very like Vesuvius and the Apennines in winter—a very certain piece of fact—but what very remarkable and objectionable mules!

33. Highland Gillie, with Dogs and Black Game.

I suffer intense anxiety to see this remarkable gillie, who never grows old, and who has had for the last ten years of Mr. Tayler's painting him the same little portcullis of carmine on his left cheek, and the same narrow stream of liquorice down his forehead and the right side of his nose.

It is not Presidential work, Mr. Tayler[5]—you know as well as I that it is not right; and you know, better than I, how much you could do with that facile hand of yours if you chose. It seems to me you might paint dogs and ponies as well as Landseer, and Highland gillies, full of life, with real Celtic blood in their cheeks, instead of these little tartan patterns of rouge, if you would only forego for a year or two the pretty praise of the drawing-room—despise for ever the boisterous praise of the stable—and set yourself to paint veritable human nature, instead of

[1] [Now the Villa Carlotta, at Cadenabbia: see *The Poetry of Architecture* (Vol. I. p. 84).]

[2] [William Evans (1809–1858), often called "Evans of Bristol" (where he was born) to distinguish him from another water-colour painter, William Evans "of Eton" (1798–1877). He was elected an Associate of the Society in 1845.]

[3] ["Wastwater Lake, Cumberland."]

[4] ["Near Sorrento: Morning."]

[5] [Of the work of Frederick Tayler, President of the Old Water-Colour Society from 1858 to 1871, Ruskin was early an admirer: see Vol. I. p. 7, and Vol. III. p. 120; and compare *ibid.*, p. 408. See also above, p. 79.]

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lay figures in tasselled caps (compare No. 132);[1] and veritable dog form and power, instead of those little yelping (they *do* yelp, certainly!) compounds of bistre-blots and flakes of white, with dots in every eye to make them glitter.

46. A Mountain Torrent, Late in Autumn. (*C. Branwhite.*)

Further carried than the artist's usual work, expressing some sufficient solidity in the rocks, and reaching some grandeur of form in the hills. But whence came the idea of painting autumn in the Highlands without a mountain ash—nay, without one dead leaf or withered fern? I assume that this scene is to be imagined in the Highlands: it very certainly *is* nowhere; but it is more like a Scottish glen than a Welsh one (entirely unlike the Alps); and if Scottish scenery is pre-eminent in anything, it is just in the gold and scarlet of the mountain ashes in early November, and in the way the dark purple rocks get studded with the dead leaves like golden byzants, the wind carrying them in whirls into their crannies, and the moist mists fastening them to the surfaces without washing them down, till every lonely crag looks like one of Veronese's purple robes embossed with gold. How it is possible for a painter to walk once through a Highland glen in autumn and miss this, I cannot conceive; nor how Mr. Branwhite, possessing some real power of drawing, can like these various conditions of scratch and dash in brown paint better than curled tops of closing fern, or than the splendid iron-russet sprays of the dead heath-blossoms, soft here and there with faint lilac, where a living bell remains.

However, slight and affected as the work is, it is firmer than last year's;[2] and we must hope better things for the future.

[1] ["Otter Hunting in the Highlands: Crossing a Ferry. From the pack of His Grace the Duke of Atholl."]

[2] [See above, p. 127.]

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62. A Lingerer. (*W. Turner.*)

Not up to Mr. Turner's usual work, but the only thing I have seen this year at all like heather. 172 is, however, a very impressive and precious drawing;[1] full of truth in its far-off Highland hills, and glowing sky, and low-floating mists.

72. Sty Head Tarn, Cumberland: Early Morning. (*S. P. Jackson.*)

Very pathetic and true in its waves of mist, under sunrise, but too monotonous in colour of clouds. The rock foreground expresses faithfully the fact, too often overlooked, of a great rounded mass of slate splitting and gaping gradually under frost, giving a flat-bottomed block at the top, with a rounded back like a turtle's, and flat tabular masses in succession below, rounded on their outer edges.

112. A Winter Scene—Carting Ice. (*E. Duncan.*)

Carefully studied in some of its aerial effects; but winter mists would be enchanting indeed, if they could turn trees into knots of serpents. It is very strange that Mr. Duncan should work so conscientiously and quietly through the difficult part of his drawing, and yet not take the small pains which would have made the whole satisfactory, by sketching that tree on the left, and the pollard willow on the right, from Nature. Any tree in the world would have done; and when Mr. Duncan does draw a tree from Nature, he will find that a bough half a foot thick at the beginning of it, ramifies into more than two twigs at the end of it.

[1] ["View from Quiraing, a crater-like hollow in the hill near Steinsholl Bay, Isle of Skye."]

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126. In the Sabine Hills. (*Carl Haag.*[1])

Very beautiful and right—up to the point sought. I have perhaps never before seen a piece of the Italian limestone, scorched dry in the sun, so thoroughly realized, whether in the lie of the oblique beds under the shrine, or in the mass on this side of the path spotted with black lichen. The distant mountain is very soft and lovely in colour, and quite as true as lovely. The reflected light in the roof of the shrine is rightly cast and richly glowing. What can possibly be the matter with this picture —making it not a great one—for a great one assuredly it is not?

I believe the same things are the matter with it, only in a far less painful degree, which destroys so much of the value of Carl Haag's figure pieces; namely, a delight in texture rather than in forms or undulations of surface—or (in rougher words) in the skin rather than the make of things; further, a delight in violent contrasts of colour rather than in finely invented harmonies of it (the same thing as the endeavour of a composer to get effect by passages of flute and harp after drum and trumpet, instead of by real invention of successions in chords); and lastly and chiefly, a tendency to stage sentiment rather than life sentiment, making him insist always more on costume than expression—nay, in fact, always see costume first. And, observe, this error is not merely the common one of which the Pre-Raphaelites are so often accused (for the most part falsely), of painting accessories better than principalities, when the principalities are nevertheless seen and tried for. For in Carl Haag's work the principal things are *not* seen. A peasant offers herself to his eyes as a kind of book of patterns: the main phenomena of her are her cap and

[1] [Carl Haag (*b.* 1820)—afterwards known chiefly for his Eastern drawings—a native of Bavaria, settled in England in 1847, and became an Associate of the Water-Colour Society in 1850. For an interesting notice of him, see the *History* of that Society, ii. 341–352.]

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bodice; he cannot recover from the sensation of astonishment at her dress so as to discern that there is a human being within it. A man is, in his eyes, mainly different from a chamois in wearing leggings: if Cadmus had sown hobnails instead of teeth, one might have expected a crop of such men as these. I verily believe that the best thing the painter could do would be to go to the Tyrol, and himself wear green breeches and a conical hat till he got quite used to them, and perceived that there was really nothing so awful nor wonderful in either, but that he might paint without being overpowered by their presence.

He is, however, doing better every year. This landscape seems to me a great step in advance, and I hope we shall have more of the kind. Carl Haag's forte, as it has been in worsted among men, will evidently be in lichens among rocks; but that is no reason why these respectable and long-lived vegetables should not have their painters. By the way, they and the fungi have all fortune's favour this year; for William Hunt's beautiful little picture (244)[1] is the first, so far as I know, painted entirely in honour of the little ephemeral beauties, as Carl Haag's is the first which has entirely expressed the character of the black stains of mountain life which hardly change their shapes in a thousand years.

130. Lihou Island, near Guernsey. (*P. J. Naftel.*)

An excellent study of sea-shore. His "Rocquaine Bay," 58, is hung so high that it is likely to escape notice; and this would be a pity, were it but for the beauty of the subject: it is pleasant to know what lovely lanes there are in the Channel Islands, in full green in this present spring time. Rather too green, I think, here on paper. Tree shadows are more violet.

[1] [See below, pp. 203, 205.]

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197. Declining Day. View in Argyllshire. (*A. P. Newton.*[1])

It is curious what compensation time and tide bring for every evil. First come railroads, to make us all restless; next come faithful painters, to draw everything so well that we needn't leave home to see it. Let Mr. Newton but draw all the four sides of Ben Nevis as he has done this one, and nobody need ever go to the mountain again for the mere sake of seeing what it is like. I know all about it, nearly, already, though I never have been near it, merely by this one drawing—quite wonderful in its expression of Scottish hill form, and very right and noble in colour. I believe it was hastily finished under heavy disadvantage, owing to an accident which happened to the painter; the foreground is therefore coarse, and I think the lower purples of the mountain may, in another such drawing, be purer and lovelier; but the expression of its shaly sides and knotted crags cannot be much bettered.

In 145 ["Entrance to the Caledonian Canal"] the mountains are also nobly drawn, but the foreground is again incomplete; the houses and other near objects look mean and small.

285. An Italian Cottage Door. (*Alfred Fripp.*[2])

All of this painter's work in the room is of exceeding interest to me, more significative of progress and more full in promise than any other; and that in three ways—in method of work, system of shade, and intention of sentiment.

[1] [Alfred Pizzey Newton (1830–1883) was elected an Associate of the Old Water-Colour Society in the year of this Exhibition, and a full member in 1879. Newton had previously made some sketches in the Highlands for Queen Victoria; he was also commissioned by her to paint a picture for a wedding gift to the Princess Royal on her marriage.]

[2] [Alfred Downing Fripp (*b.* 1822) was younger brother of George Fripp (see p. 125 *n.*). He became Associate of the Old Water-Colour Society in 1844, and member in 1846. During the years of Ruskin's *Academy Notes* Fripp lived at Rome, and his drawings were all of Italian subjects.]

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In method of work it is pure and straightforward, truly *painted*—not sponged or washed; and in places completely finished. I cannot but suppose it is through mere accident and want of time that this principal subject (285) is so unequal in completion; portions of it are quite sketchy and coarse; while other portions of it even give hope that Mr. Fripp may in due time not unworthily fill some of the places which John Lewis has left vacant on the walls. I feared at first, on seeing how the face and dress of the mother were wrought, while the arbour and architecture were neglected, that Mr. Fripp had not disentangled himself from the old fallacy about generalizing subordinate parts; but I see with comfort that some subordinate parts—the cat, winking in the sun, and the pinks, for instance, on the right hand—are carried nearly to faultless completion. On the whole I think that passage nearly the best bit of painting in the room. It has no look of painful elaboration; shows no stipple or mannerism of touch; appears to be done easily as well as completely; and is quite beautiful in the conception of its pale colour in the sun. But much has to be done yet, Mr. Fripp. Our Italian mother is unsatisfactory; it is but smirking, not passionate, maternity; her gown is well drawn, but not her body; our old woman plays her part of monster too monstrously; our vines will never grow any grapes. We must have everything up to the cat's mark next year, please.

Then, in the second place, Mr. Fripp's work is progressive in its system of shade, or rather of light. That Church of St. Olivano[1] (37), which looks so strange in its paleness among all the old-fashioned water-colours about it, has had its colours carefully matched with sunshine. Only it will never do to leave hard edges and thin washes, if we are going to paint in that key. Treble notes must not be sharp and thin; the higher they are the more tender they must be, and in a certain sense the richer: it is the rich trebles

[1] [The "Maddolina" and Church of San Rocco, Olivano.]

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that are sweet and precious, not the meagre ones. The paler the tone of a picture the more sweet must be its textures, and the more subtle its gradations; else it will always look like a strange half-finished sketch, not as this picture really is, a most truthful study of sunlight. What people usually suppose to be like sunlight in pictures is only like twilight or lamplight; this goes nearly as far towards Italian noonday as poor paper and colour can reach.

And, in the third but the chief place, all Mr. Fripp's pictures are well designed, their subjects being chosen with great sense of the moral force and meaning of every incident; even the small figures in this are entirely right in conception. But he has not yet enough knowledge of the figure to carry out his purposes; he is, indeed, quite in a transitional state, hesitating between landscape and figures. I think, chiefly in consequence of the way he has put in those monks of St. Olivano, that it will be quite worth his while to make the figures principal. No. 101, also, "Evening on the Abruzzi Mountains," is in idea a most beautiful picture. But of course neither the drawing of boy or dog is as yet possible to the artist; he must choose between retracting his figures into insignificance, and leaving only hills and clouds, or enabling himself, by a good hard year or two's work, to draw the figures rightly. I hope he will choose the steeper path.

### 244. Fungi.[1] (*W. Hunt.*)

That we may have the pleasure of parting with words of unqualified praise, we must look last at this exquisite drawing, and therefore must glance, somewhat out of their order, at Mr. S. Palmer's "Going to India," 256,[2] which looks at first cruder and harsher than it is, but gains by a

[1] [See also No. 149 in the *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, p. 445 of this volume.]
[2] [For Samuel Palmer, see *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 605 *n.*).]

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long look, and has deep feeling in it; and so, taking what good there is on the screens as we pass (especially Carl Haag's "Arch at Spalatro," 288, another of the save-trouble drawings which are as good as seeing the thing itself), to Mr. Hunt's "View from Richmond Hill," 306, very notable for its air, and sunshine, and quaint expression of the contentment of the worthy English middle classes in sitting on benches beside park palings; as well as for its expression of all the ugliest and intensely characteristic qualities of our English elms, and, indeed, of our English trees generally, which always appear to me, as compared with French trees, to grow in paroxysms of *mauvaise honte*, sticking out their elbows everywhere in the wrong places, and stiffening themselves against every breeze that would bend them into grace, till all their leaves stand on end at last in sheer misery and shame at the shapes they have been got into.[1] Then to the "Peach and Grapes," 314, wherein note the wonderful light in dark of the peach's dark side, and the subtle finish of composition by help of the strawberry, whose stalk follows and relieves the curve of the round peach, and with the raised point of its green receptacle (or whatever the botanists call it) expresses its sympathy, as far as a strawberry can, with the descending curve of the bunch of grapes. Then across to 282 ["Fruit"], one of the very noblest fruit pieces which Mr. Hunt ever painted, and look well at the greengages, and the brown spots in the shadow on them. How he gets that stalk, with all its faint colour, to stand out, as it clearly does, an inch from the plums, so that but for the glass it is all but * morally certain we might lay hold of it, passes nearly all the mysteries of imitative

* Not *quite* certain—there is a shade of doubt about its tangibility—just enough to keep it in its rank of noble painting. All entirely deceptive work is bad.[2]

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[1] [For another reference to the gracefulness of French trees, see *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 238).]

[2] [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 116) and *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 73).]

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painting I have seen. And thus, lastly, to these scarlet —no, not scarlet—nor crimson—nor in any wise speakably coloured fungi, for which, with a serious heart, I thank the painter, and with more thanks than I can give for any other picture here, as having best shown us the gracious splendour which there is in the meanest herb of the field.

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V

# NOTES

ON SOME OF

# THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF THE

# ROYAL ACADEMY

THE OLD AND NEW

## SOCIETIES OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS, THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, AND THE FRENCH EXHIBITION.

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*No.* V.—1859.

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By JOHN RUSKIN, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "MODERN PAINTERS," "STONES OF VENICE," "SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE," "ELEMENTS OF DRAWING," ETC., ETC.

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1859.

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[*Bibliographical Note.*—Of No. V. of the *Academy Notes*, there was only one separate edition. The title-page was as shown on the preceding page. An octavo pamphlet of 56 pages. Half-title (with blank reverse), pp. 1–2; title-page (with blank reverse), pp. 3–4; preface (here p. 209), with blank reverse, pp. 5–6; text, pp. 7–56. At the foot of the last page is the imprint—"London: Printed by Smith, Elder & Co., Little Green Arbour Court, E.C." No headlines, the pages being numbered centrally. Inserted at the end are twenty-four pages of advertisements of books published by Smith, Elder & Co. Issued on May 9, in green paper wrappers. On p. 1 the title-page is reproduced, enclosed in a plain double-ruled frame; with the words "*Price One Shilling*" at the foot, below; on p. 4 are advertisements of "Mr. Ruskin's Works on Art."

*Reprinted* (1902) in *Ruskin on Pictures*, vol. ii. pp. 173–217.

*Reviews* appeared in the *Economist*, May 28; the *Building News*, May 27; the *Witness*, June 13, 15; the *Literary Gazette* (of *Two Paths* also), June 4; the *Constitutional Press*, June 1859, vol. i. pp. 181–188 ("The Exhibition of the Royal Academy and Mr. Ruskin," by H. Noel Humphreys); the *Art Journal*, August 1859, N.S., vol. 5, p. 232 (as a footnote at the end of an article entitled "Ruskin *v.* Raphael").

In this edition, two misprints have been corrected; on p. 247, "Cousens" being altered to "Cozens," and on p. 251, "57" becoming "1857"; see also p. 255 *n.*]

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# PREFACE

I HOPE henceforward to do without preface; for the real state of our schools in any given year cannot be described in few words, and after the most earnest analysis of the causes of advance or decline, the real result will always be inexplicable. Great painters will every now and then appear when no one expects them; or perhaps disappear suddenly through trap-doors without any visible reason for their exit; and the critic can only congratulate in simplicity, or lament in amazement. The present Exhibition shows steady advance among the younger students; the more experienced masters, whether Academic or Pre-Raphaelite, are either absent or indolent; but I have never seen the Academy walls show so high an average of good work.



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# EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

12. Reminiscences of the Ball. (*G. D. Leslie.*[1])

It must be a great delight to Mr. Leslie to see his son do such good work as this. There is not a prettier little piece of painting on the walls, and very few half so pretty. All the accessories, too, are at once quaint and graceful, showing an enjoyment of elegance in form (even down to the design of the frame of the picture, and the bars of the chair) which is very rare among the young painters of the rising school. This grace of fancy is shown no less in the little Chinese subject by the same artist (351, "Kin-le-Chaon"), which, however, is not quite so thoroughly painted. I shall look anxiously for Mr. Leslie's work next year, for he seems to have truly the power of composition, and that is the gift of gifts if it be rightly used.[2] He colours very well already.

13. A Boy in Florentine Costume. (*Mrs. J. B. Hay.*)

Very masterly and complete in effect, and like the Val d'Arno; so also its companion, No. 173.[3] But the intention of this latter is mistaken. An English boy, however

[1] [Mr. George Dunlop Leslie (*b.* 1835), youngest son of C. R. Leslie, R.A., was elected A.R.A. in 1868, and R.A. in 1876.]

[2] [On this subject compare Vol. XII. p. 387.]

[3] ["England and Italy. Painted in the Val d'Arno, 1859." In a note in the catalogue the artist explains her intention: "Two boys, one of English type, the other an Italian boy of the people. In one I have endeavoured to express the pure happiness of our children; in the other, the obstination (*sic*) of the oppressed and suffering poor of Italy."]



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luxuriously bred, has usually twenty times the firmness in his face that an Italian one has. Italian boys are beautiful—full of vitality and roguery; lazy, and, on the whole, well fed, wherever I have seen them. There is more misery of an outward and physical kind in a couple of London back-streets than in a whole Italian town. Mental degradation, not physical suffering, constitutes the slavery of Italy; both constitute that of England. Italian slavery is infinitely grander than ours. The souls of Italy at least need iron bars to bind them; ours need only the threads of purses.

15. THE VALE OF REST.[1] (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

I have no doubt the beholder is considerably offended at first sight of this picture—justifiably so, considering what might once have been hoped for from its painter; but unjustifiably, if the offence taken prevents his staying by it, for it deserves his study. "We are offended by it." Granted. Perhaps the painter did not mean us to be pleased. It may be that he supposed we should have been offended if we had seen the real nun digging her real grave;* that she and it might have appeared to us not altogether pathetic, romantic, or sublime, but only strange or horrible; and that he chooses to fasten this sensation upon us rather than any other.

It is a temper into which many a good painter has fallen before now. You would not find it a pleasant thing to be left at twilight in the church of the Madonna of the Garden at Venice, with the last light falling on the skeletons—half alive, dreamy, stammering skeletons—shaking

* I believe, in point of fact, nuns neither dig their own graves nor erect tombstones; but we will take the picture on its own terms.

[1] ["Where the weary find repose" (see Job iii. 17) was added in the catalogue as a motto. This picture is now in the Tate Gallery (No. 1507). The *Athenæum* (April 30, 1859) had referred to the unpleasantness of "the red skull of a face and staring coarse black eyes" in the nun. "Year Mr. Millais gave forth those terrible nuns in the graveyard"—thus did *Punch* characterise 1859. In 1862 Millais repainted the head of the seated nun. For various particulars about the picture, see E. T. Cook's *Popular Handbook to the National Gallery* (British schools).]

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the dust off their ribs, in Tintoret's "Last Judgment."[1] Perhaps even you might not be at your ease before one or two pale crucifixes which I remember of Giotto's and other not mean men, where the dark red runlets twine and trickle from the feet down to the skull at the root of the cross.[2] Many an ugly spectre and ghastly face has been painted by the gloomier German workmen before now, and been in some sort approved by us; nay, there is more horror by far, of a certain kind, in modern French works—Vernet's Eylau and Plague,[3] and such like—which we do not hear any one declaim against; nay, which seem to meet a large division of public taste—than in this picture which so many people call "frightful."

Why *so* frightful? Is it not because it is so nearly beautiful?—Because the dark green field, and windless trees, and purple sky might be so lovely to persons unconcerned about their graves?

Or is it that the faces are so ugly? You would have liked them better to be fair faces, such as would grace a drawing-room; and the grave to be dug in prettier ground —under a rose-bush or willow, and in turf set with violets —nothing like a bone visible as one threw the mould out. So, it would have been a sweet piece of convent sentiment.

I am afraid that it is a good deal more like real convent sentiment as it is. Death—confessed for king before his time—asserts, so far as I have seen, some authority over such places; either unperceived, and then the worst, in drowsy unquickening of the soul; or felt and terrible, pouring out his white ashes upon the heart — ashes that burn with cold. If you think what the kind of persons who have strength of conviction enough to give up the world might have done for the world had they *not* given it up; and how the King of Terror must rejoice when he wins for himself another soul that might have gone forth

[1] [This is the picture described in *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 274–277).]

[2] [The MS. shows that Ruskin first wrote "foot" of the cross, altering the word afterwards to "root."]

[3] [For Horace Vernet, see Vol. V. pp. 124 *n.*, 126. Many of his battle pictures are at Versailles, but the editors have been unable to trace the Eylau and Plague.]

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to calm the earth, and folds his wide white wings over it for ever (He also gathering his children together);[1] and how those white sarcophagi, towered and belfried, each with his companies of living dead, gleam still so multitudinous among the mountain pyramids of the fairest countries of the earth —places of silence for their sweet voices; places of binding for their faithfullest hands; places of fading for their mightiest intelligences;—you may, perhaps, feel also that so great wrong cannot be lovely in the near aspect of it; and that if this very day, at evening, we were allowed to see what the last clouds of twilight glow upon in some convent garden of the Apennines, we might leave the place with some such horror as this picture will leave upon us; not all of it noble horror, but in some sort repulsive and ignoble.

It is, for these reasons, to me, a great work. Nevertheless, part of its power is not to the painter's praise. The crude painting is here in a kind of harmony with the expression of discord which was needed. But it is crude—not in momentary compliance with the mood which prompted this wild design, but in apparent consistency of decline from the artist's earlier ways of labour.

Pass to his other picture—the "Spring"[2]—and we find the colour not less abrupt, though more vivid. And when we look at this fierce and rigid orchard—this angry blooming (petals, as it were, of japanned brass); and remember the lovely wild roses and flowers scattered on the stream in the "Ophelia";[3] there is, I regret to say, no ground for any diminution of the doubt which I expressed two years since[4] respecting the future career of a painter who can fall thus strangely beneath himself.

[1] [See Matthew xxiii. 37.]

[2] [No. 298. This picture, better known under the title "Apple Blossoms," is now in the possession of Mr. Clarke. The central figure was painted from Miss Georgiana Moncrieff (afterwards Countess of Dudley). The history of the picture—"the most unfortunate of Millais's pictures," Lady Millais called it—is given in his *Life and Letters*, i. 323.]

[3] [Exhibited at the Academy in 1852. For other references to it, see above, p. 107, and below, p. 496 *n.*]

[4] [See above, p. 107.]

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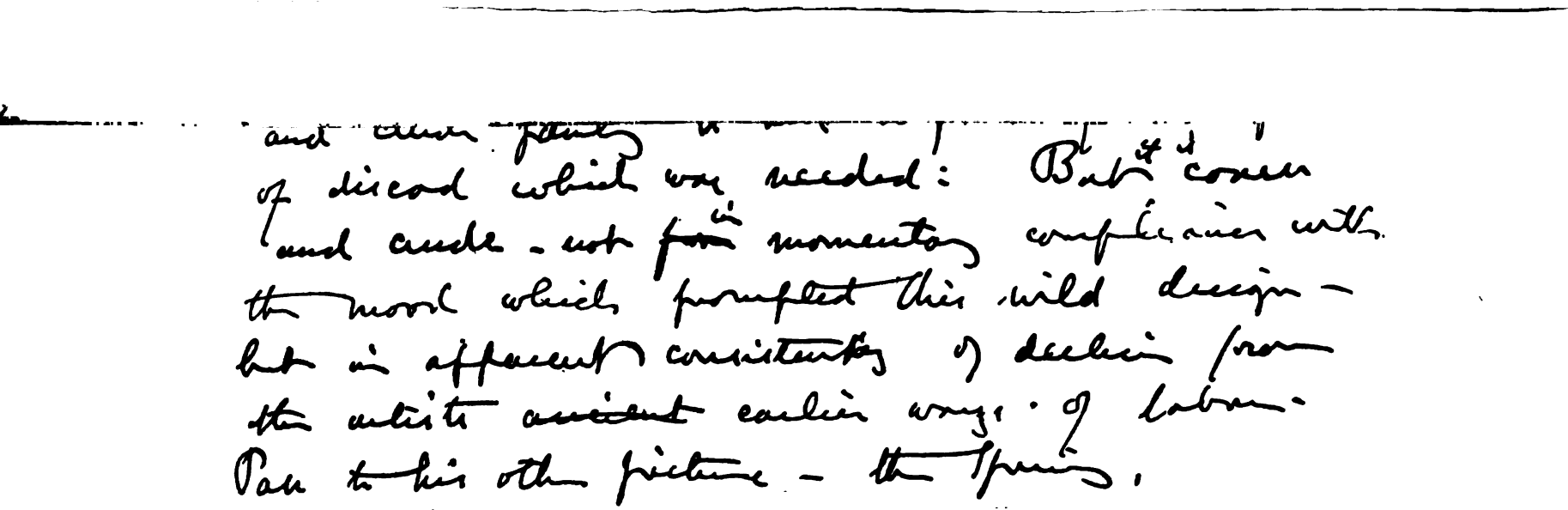

A Page of the MS. of "Academy Notes," 1859

pp. 214–215

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The power has not yet left him. With all its faults, and they are grievous, this is still mighty painting: nothing else is as strong, or approximately as strong, within these walls. But it is a phenomenon, so far as I know, unparalleled hitherto in art history, that any workman capable of so much should rest content with so little. All former art, by men of any intellect, has been wrought, under whatever limitations of time, as well as the painter could do it; evidently with an effort to reach something beyond what was actually done: if a sketch, the sketch showed a straining towards completion; if a picture, it showed a straining to a higher perfection. But here, we have a careless and insolent indication of things that might be; not the splendid promise of a grand impatience, but the scrabbled remnant of a scornfully abandoned aim.

And this wildness of execution is strangely associated with the distortion of feature which more or less has been sought for by this painter from his earliest youth; just as it was by Martin Schöngauer[1] and Mantegna. In the first picture (from Keats's "Isabella") which attracted public attention, the figure in the foreground writhed in violence of constrained rage; in the picture of the "Holy Family at Nazareth" the Virgin's features were contorted in sorrow over a wounded hand; violent ugliness of feature spoiled a beautiful arrangement of colour in the "Return of the Dove," and disturbed a powerful piece of dramatic effect in the "Escape from the Inquisition."[2] And in this present picture, the unsightliness of some of the faces, and the preternatural grimness of others, with the fierce colour and angular masses of the flowers above, force upon me a strange impression, which I cannot shake off—that this is

[1] [See Vol. VI. p. 400.]

[2] ["Lorenzo and Isabella" (1848) is now in the Corporation Gallery at Liverpool. For the "Holy Family at Nazareth," otherwise known as "Christ in the House of His Parents" (1849) and "The Return of the Dove to the Ark" (1851), see Vol. XII. pp. 320, 323. For "The Escape of a Heretic" (1857), see above, p. 110. Ruskin had called attention to the point noticed above in his second letter to the *Times* on "The Pre-Raphaelite Brethren," Vol. XII. p. 325.]

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an illustration of the song of some modern Dante, who, at the first entrance of an Inferno for English society, had found, carpeted with ghostly grass, a field of penance for young ladies, where girl-blossoms, who had been vainly gay, or treacherously amiable, were condemned to recline in reprobation under red-hot apple blossom, and sip scalding milk out of a poisoned porringer.

40. THE NIGHT BEFORE NASEBY. (*A. L. Egg, A.*)

An interesting contribution to the store of hints for better understanding of English history which painters and poets are now continually throwing out for us. This scene is, however, hardly strange enough to have the look of reality: it is what we should, or could, all imagine about Cromwell; while most likely, if we had really been able to look into his tent the night before Naseby, the look of him would have been something different from what we should have imagined. A picture which is not at first a little wonderful to us, can hardly at last be true to us.

68. A HUFF. (*J. Phillip, A.*)

Full of powerful and dexterous painting; but ungraceful, and slightly vulgar. This last character is given chiefly by the brilliancy of petticoat and chenille, prevailing at once over passions, faces, and landscape. It is, indeed, quite right to elaborate details; but not the ignoblest details first and best. All! or none. If chenille—then, *à fortiori*, orange bough and blossom; if blue petticoat—*à fortiori*, blue sky. The orange tree, it might be said, would have spoiled the faces if it had been made out. Then put something behind them that will not spoil them; but always paint it well, whatever it is.

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95. THE LATE CAPTAIN SIR CHARLES HOTHAM.[1] (*G. Richmond, A.*)

This is a very noble portrait; full of simple and manly character, vigorous and complete in workmanship: but all the best of it is here lost, and what deficiency exists in its dark colour brought out, both by its height above the eye, and by the neighbourhood of the white dresses in the portraits beneath it; and thus a great injustice is done to the painter, and a real loss (for it is a serious one not to see this admirably wrought head better) caused to the public, merely for the sake of the symmetries of the saloon—that a diagonal line of general in No. 95 may balance a diagonal line of lady in No 69.[2] In the Louvre, at this moment, the French use their best old pictures, the treasures of Europe, in the same way, and hang Titian's and Rubens's portraits to balance each other, forty feet above the eye. Such treatment of great pictures is simply, and in the full sense of the word, "savage"; such things cannot be done, whether by us here, or by the French in the Louvre, but in a clownish ignorance of the meaning of the word "picture," and of the entire value and purpose of painting. And, indeed, when the pictures are wholly precious and perfect, like the Titian with the red-capped St. Joseph, which the French have hung high out of sight in the Louvre,[3] or like the Sir Joshua's "Holy Family," which we have thrust into the darkest room in Marlborough House,[4] "clownish" is not a strong enough word for the mischief; "savage" is the accurate expression. A clown buys ornaments for his cottage chimney-piece, without much understanding of their merit as

[1] [Sir Charles Hotham, R.N., K.C.B. (1800–1855), was Governor of the colony of Victoria (1854–1855): this portrait was painted for presentation to the corporation of the city of Melbourne.]

[2] ["The Countess della Torre," by R. Buckner.]

[3] [For Ruskin's criticism of the hanging of the picture at the Louvre at this time, see "Notes on the Louvre" (Vol. XII. pp. 448 *seq.*), and Vol. XIII. p. 544.]

[4] [The "Holy Family" (No. 78) is now a wreck, owing to Sir Joshua's unfortunate experiments with his pigments; it has for many years been withdrawn from exhibition.]

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works of art; but at least he puts them where he can see them. But your savage, to whom, after much polite and instructive conversation about England, thinking to deepen the impression on his mind, you make a present of miniatures of the Queen and Prince Albert, presently attaches the Queen to one ear and Prince Albert to the other, and dances round you with a howl. We two great nations, French and English, "wear" our noble pictures precisely in this manner.

It is to be hoped that in the arrangement of the building about to be raised for the occupation of the Academy,[1] the fact may be at last acknowledged that a picture which is worth seeing at all is worth seeing well;[2] that a picture gallery needs space, but not height—and rational sequence, not overwhelming concentration, of its treasures.

The portrait of the Dean of Westminster,[3] No. 510, shows Mr. Richmond's power more satisfactorily.

113. CLARKSON STANFIELD, ESQ., R.A. (*D. Macnee.*[4])

A good portrait;[5] only Mr. Stanfield's eyes are more piercing, even in general, and must be especially so when he is sketching. And surely the portrait of a landscape painter ought to have a background. Velasquez always allows his admirals a little sea; might not Mr. Stanfield have had at least a rock and a wave?

135. WAITING FOR THE FERRY-BOAT — UPPER EGYPT. (*J. F. Lewis, A.*)

Well, of course, it is very nice. Housings and camels—palm trees—clouds, and sheikh. But waiting for a ferry-boat

[1] [The present Burlington House.]
[2] [Compare on this subject, Vol. XIII. pp. 402, 410.]
[3] [R. C. Trench, Dean of Westminster, 1856–1863; Archbishop of Dublin, 1864–1884.]
[4] [Sir David Macnee (1806–1882), portrait-painter, was elected a member of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1829. He became its President in 1876, and was knighted.]
[5] [Painted for the Portrait Gallery of the Royal Scottish Academy.]

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is dull work; and are we never to get out of Egypt any more? nor to perceive the existence of any living creatures but Arabs and camels? Is there nothing paintable in England, nor Spain, nor Italy?[1] Or, in the East, if we *must* live in the East, is no landscape ever visible but a dead level of mud raised two feet above a slow stream? I have heard of lovely hills and convents at Athos—of green trees and flowing waters at Damascus—of mighty rocks at Petra and Mount Hor—of wonderful turrets and enamelled walls at Cairo: surely the mosaic of a marble turret is as pretty a thing to paint as a camel-housing; and it would take no more trouble to draw the ridges of an Arabian mountain than the folds of that everlasting sheik's cloak! We go to this melancholy Egypt through plague, and mosquitoes, and misery of every sort—and all we see for our pains is a camel with a fine carpet on his back. Cannot we see that any day at the Zoological Gardens? But the Sphinx, and the temples, and the hieroglyphics, and the mirage, and simoom, and everything that we want to know about, and that one would be so thankful to have painted properly—shall we never have any of these? It is too unkind of you, Mr. Lewis; and it serves you quite right to be put up there, where nobody can see a bit of your good work, but only your dull subject. But what is this we have got put underneath you, which looks like a tobacconist's sign? a valuable work, it is to be hoped—let us see.

137. THE FUSEE. (*A. Cooper, R.A.*[2])

The sublime of English art, truly! A lake, with ingenious white touches at the edges, to mark it from the mountains;

[1] [Ruskin particularly regretted that Lewis did not devote himself to Venice. "I would give anything," he wrote to his father from Venice (September 16, 1851), "if John Lewis would come; he is the only man who could draw it, and he would do it *perfectly*." Compare another letter already given above, p. 167 *n*.]

[2] [Abraham Cooper (1787–1868) was elected A.R.A. in 1817 and R.A. in 1820. In the year of this Exhibition he was seventy-two. His works were mostly of sporting subjects. Two small pictures by him, of the year 1818, are in the South Kensington Museum.]

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some rocks of leather; sky-blue heather; wooden-headed people, displaying themselves in the athletic exercise of smoking; and a pool of water, with vertical reflections of sloping lines! A superb art lesson for the line of the Academy—heroic and optical at once. It is interesting, especially, to see that, in the present state of British science, one may write R.A. after one's name, yet not be able to paint a gutter.

160. THE CHURCH OF STA. MARIA DELLA SALUTE. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*)

My dear Mr. Roberts, *is* this like a church built of white Carrara marble? La Salute is verily as white as snow in some places; black-spotted or ochre-spotted in others; but delicate and lovely everywhere. And then the gondoliers! still always where they couldn't possibly row! It would be very comfortable for gondoliers if they might stand in the middle of the boat close by the canopy; but to their sorrow, sometimes to their misfortune, they must stand far back, poised on the point of the giddy stern. I say "sometimes to their misfortune"; for, as if specially to illustrate Mr. Leslie's* declaration, in defence of Canaletti against some fault-finding of mine, that the water, "as it approached the houses, was sheltered from the breeze," my strongest gondolier was blown off his perch into the canal at my own door one day, just opposite this very church, and had nearly been brained against the doorstep.[1]

I much regret Mr. Roberts's abandonment of his old picturesque subjects for these severe ones. He had a great gift of expressing the ins and outs of Spanish balconies and roofs, and the hollow work of complex tracery; and all

* *Handbook for Young Painters*, p. 269.[2]

[1] [Ruskin refers again to this incident in a letter to Professor Charles Eliot Norton: see Vol. IX. p. xxviii.]

[2] [Compare p. 168, above. Leslie's reference was to *Modern Painters*, vol. i. pt. ii. sec. v. ch. i. § 18: see Vol. III. p. 513, where, in a note added to this edition, the passage in the *Handbook* is cited.]

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his skill of this kind is now passing away into formal architectural drawing in brown and grey. His old painting of the spires of Burgos Cathedral[1]—of its turreted chapter-house—the tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella—the towers and courts of the Alhambra, etc., involved points of interest and displays of skill which none of his subjects at present either contain or admit; while their generally smaller size prevented the painter's wearying at his work, and enabled us to have five or six subjects each year instead of two.

165. MARY MAGDALENE.[2] (*J. R. Herbert, R.A.*)

Very beautiful, and an interesting example of the noble tendency of modern religious art to conceive scenes as they really in probability occurred; not in merely artistic modification or adaptation.

The picture tells its story sufficiently, and needs no comment. It is not of high artistic merit, but a sincere and gentle conception, adequately, and therefore very touchingly, expressed.

167. "JUST AS THE TWIG IS BENT, THE TREE'S INCLINED." (*W. Mulready, R.A.*)

I see that this picture has been depreciatingly spoken of in several of the journals. I think unjustly so. It is as good as Mr. Mulready's work usually is. I had occasion last year[3] to point out the general defect of that work—namely, that the painter is evidently thinking only of himself and his drawing—never caring the least about what he has to draw; of which, therefore, he misses precisely the most valuable characters, and succeeds in using more

[1] [See in the national collection the picture of "The Cathedral at Burgos" (No. 400 in the Tate Gallery), painted in 1835.]
[2] [Study for part of a picture of the holy women passing at daybreak over the place of crucifixion.]
[3] [In 1857, not 1858: see above, p. 101.]

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skill in painting Nothing than any painter ever spent before on that subject.

If the trees in the background are supposed to be typical of education, they ought to have been better grown. Mr. Mulready's trees are often supposed by artists to be well drawn, merely because they are well *rounded*. But they are, nevertheless, mannered in execution, and false in tree anatomy.

190. BARLEY HARVEST ON THE WELSH COAST. (*C. P. Knight.*[1])

A delightful subject, forcibly, because harmoniously, rendered, though without any subtlety of execution. I am glad to observe how much the public enjoy a piece of plain fact like this, plainly told; and how they rejoice in their gradual discovery that ground may be golden and sea blue, no less than brown and grey.

211. JEANIE DEANS AND QUEEN CAROLINE. (*C. R. Leslie, R.A.*)

The more I learn of art, the more respect I feel for Mr. Leslie's painting, as such; and for the way it brings out the expressional result he requires. Given a certain quantity of oil colour to be laid with one touch of pencil, so as to produce at once the subtlest and largest expressional result possible, and there is no man now living who seems to me to come at all near Mr. Leslie, his work being, in places, equal to Hogarth[2] for decision, and here and there a little lighter and more graceful (Hogarth always laying his colour somewhat in daubs and spots). But I am obliged to write above, "the result he (Mr. Leslie) requires," as being very completely distinguished from the result that

[1] [Charles Parsons Knight (1829–1897), landscape and marine painter, first exhibited at the Academy in 1857, and frequently afterwards there and at the Society of British Artists. His drawings made special study of cloud forms and sea effects.]

[2] [For Ruskin's references to Hogarth, see Vol. XII. p. 495.]

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other people might possibly require. So long, indeed, as Mr. Leslie is dealing only with delicate, lady-like, or gentleman-like expression, he is a consummately faithful artist. I cannot help referring once more[1] to his exquisite Belinda and her lover, in his "Rape of the Lock," as types of all that can be asked in such painting; and in this picture before us, the Queen, and still more the dark-robed Lady Suffolk, are quite beautiful; as also in No. 152,[2] Lady Percy. But Jeanie here! and Harry there!! Alas, the day! Examine the two pictures well: they are among the most instructive that ever yet appeared on the Academy walls, in showing the possibility of entering completely into the spirit of the gracefulnesses of society, without the power of conceiving Heroism. To a certain extent, the mind of Reynolds was of this stamp. He could conceive a most refined lord or lady, but not a saint or Madonna; and his best hero, Lord Heathfield,[3] is but an obstinate old English gentleman after all.

Gainsborough takes very nearly the same view of us.[4] Hogarth laughs at or condemns us. Leslie, accustomed to high English life, supposes that this was Harry Percy's way of wearing his spurs. Is it not a rather strange matter that our seers, or painters, contemplating the English nation, cannot, all of them put together, paint an English hero? Nothing more than an English gentleman in an obstinate state of mind about keys; with an expression which I can conceive so exceedingly stout a gentleman of that age as occasionally putting on, even respecting the keys of the cellaret. Pray, consider of it a little, good visitors to the Royal Academy in the afternoon, whether it is altogether the painter's fault, or anybody else's!

[1] [See above, p. 38.]

[2] ["Hotspur and Lady Percy." *First Part of Henry IV.*, Act ii. sc. 3.]

[3] [No. 111 in the National Gallery. For Reynolds's limitations in the sense here indicated, see the paper on "Sir Joshua and Holbein" (*On the Old Road*, 1885, vol. i. §§ 152–153), reprinted in a later volume of this edition. On the modern types of Madonnas, see the ironical reference in *Mornings in Florence*, § 34.]

[4] [For other references to Gainsborough in this connexion, see *Ariadne Florentina*, § 48, and "Sir Joshua and Holbein," § 153.]

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287. A MALTESE XEBEC ON THE ROCKS OF PROCIDA.[1] (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

It is rather singular that the castle of Ischia, which appears in the distance of this picture, is almost the only piece of really picturesque architecture which is to be found on the Academy walls this year.

It is not, perhaps, one of Mr. Stanfield's best works, but his mountain forms are always true and bold; and after infinite and infinitesimal calls upon one's sympathy from leaves and dragon-flies, one is glad of a piece of solid rock and wall, about which one is not expected to "feel" anything particular.

310. SUNDAY IN THE BACKWOODS.[2] (*T. Faed.*)

This will of course be a very popular picture, and deserves to be so, having every claim to our observance which kindly feeling and steady average painting can give it. It does not possess any first-rate qualities; but has no serious faults, and much gentle pathos. The figure of the healthy sister, looking up, seems to me the best.

316. THE ROSE GARLAND. (*W. C. T. Dobson.*)

Evidently a most faithful portrait (colour only excepted) of a dear, good little girl—such an one as may be seen often enough, Heaven be praised! at cottage doors in England, or in France, or in Germany, or in Switzerland, or, I suppose, in Sweden. South of the Alps or Pyrenees, or east of the

[1] [A steam-tug and Neapolitan boats rendering assistance. The island and castle of Ischia in the distance.]

[2] [In the catalogue an explanatory "Extract from a letter from Canada" was given: "We have no church here but our loghouse, or the wide forest; and a grand kirk the forest makes—not even the auld cathedral has such pillars, space, nor so high a roof; so we e'en take turns about on Sunday in reading the Bible. We are all well except Jeannie, and as happy as can be, considering the country and ties we have left. Poor Jeannie is sadly changed; her only song now is, 'Why left I my hame?' But for her illness, our lot ought not to be an unhappy one."]

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Carpathians, one finds that kind of face no more. What does that peculiar northern sweetness consist in, which never showed itself, even to Giotto, nor to Raphael? their beauty being of another kind wholly—more pensive, less wise, and less active.

### 329. Felice Ballarin reciting "Tasso" to the People of Chioggia. (*F. Goodall, A.*[1])

This is a great advance beyond all Mr. Goodall's former work. It is entirely higher in aim, and deeper in rendering of character; the subject interesting; the faces, for the most part, evidently portraits, and good portraits (especially those dark ones of the men in the background); the colour, in some separate portions, rich and good, showing qualities which never before appeared to be in the least sought for, much less reached, by the painter. In fact, Mr. Goodall has been looking at Titian instead of Wilkie, and that makes a large difference in what will be got by looking.

Nevertheless the picture is far from right yet; and its failure involves an important principle, which it may be of use to state generally, at a time when nearly all our younger painters are making those vigorous efforts in new directions. It is wholly impossible to paint an effect of sunlight truly. It never has been done, and never will be. Sunshine is brighter than any mortal can paint, and all resemblances to it must be obtained by sacrifice. In order to obtain a popularly effective sunlight, colour must be sacrificed. De Hoogh, Cuyp, Claude, Both, Richard Wilson, and all other masters of sunshine, invariably reach their most telling

[1] [Frederick Goodall (1822–1904) first exhibited at the Academy in 1839. He was elected A.R.A. in 1853 and R.A. in 1863. For earlier references to him, see Vol. III. p. 326 *n.* In later years he was best known for his Eastern landscapes, of which a characteristic specimen is in the Tate Gallery (No. 1562). The subject of the picture noticed above was taken from the artist's own observation. "Felice Ballarin," he wrote, "was the name of the reciter. He was a native of Chioggia, but above the peasant class. It was a constant feast to me to watch the earnest expressions of the people who listened to his recitations. I always had my sketching pocket-book at hand to put down their attitudes and expressions." (Editor's note in *Ruskin on Pictures.*)]



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effects by harmonies of gold with grey, giving up the blues, rubies, and freshest greens. Turner did the same in his earlier work. Modern Pre-Raphaelites, and Turner in his later work, reached magnificent effects of sunshine colour, but of a kind necessarily unintelligible to the ordinary observer (as true sunshine colour will always be, since it is impossible to paint it of the pitch of light which has true relation to its shadows). And thus the "Sun of Venice," and the "Slave Ship," with Hunt's "Two Gentlemen of Verona," "Stray Sheep," and such others, failed of almost all their due effect on the popular mind.[1]

In landscape, nevertheless, to which sunshine is often necessary as part of its expression, the sacrifice must be made; and the public will, in time, understand it. But in figures, sunshine is rarely a necessary part of the expression; and all figure pictures in which it is introduced must be, to a certain extent, offensive. The obstinate endeavours of the Pre-Raphaelites to get vermilion transparencies and purple shadows into flesh, have been one of the principal and most justifiable grounds of the long opposition to them. And all great work whatsoever, of the highest school, refuses sunlight; and admits only a kind of glowing twilight, like that of Italy a quarter of an hour after sunset.

Under these circumstances, choice must be made firmly and completely. Give up your sunlight, and you may get Titian's twilight. Give up your Titianesque depth, and you may, by thorough study from Nature, get some approximation to noonday flame. But you cannot have both. Mr. Goodall has attempted both, and, of course, missed both—chiefly his sunshine, from mere inattention to its effects. For instance, the woman sitting on the right, with the green petticoat, has her lap in sunshine, her head in shade. Whatever light touches the head would be reflected light, and it

[1] [For the "Sun of Venice," No. 535 in the National Gallery, see Vol. XIII. p. 163. For references to the "Slaver," once in Ruskin's collection, see Vol. III. p. 571. To the "splendour of colour" in Holman Hunt's "Two Gentlemen of Verona," Ruskin had called attention in his letter to the *Times* of May 30, 1851, Vol. XII. p. 324. For "The Strayed Sheep," see above, p. 65.]

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would be reflected from the ground, shining strongly under her brows and on the lower part of her face; instead of which there is a shadow under the brow, exactly as if she were sitting in a room with ordinary daylight entering from above through a window. The picture is full of grammatical error of the same kind—the kind of error which in these days of earnest effort and accurate science, artists should get quit of with their long-clothes and spelling-books; whereas now, to the middle or even the close of life, they remain encumbered among petty misunderstandings, and wondering why they cannot make their art beautiful, when they have never taken the pains to make it right. There are, of course, just three simple stages of study to be gone through by every student. He has first to learn to draw a solid body in perfect light and shade, without sunlight. Then to paint it, also without sunlight; taking subjects that will give no trouble about their expression or sentiment. Then to put it into sunshine, and paint it there also, until he knows precisely the kind of difference in treatment required for it. And then—not till then—he may be able partially to colour the human face.

All this is just as simple and rational in method of procedure as practising scales in music before we try to play sonatas. But we always try to learn our painting upside down.

368. The Evening Song. (*A. Rankley.*[1])

A pretty thought, but not well enough painted. The sky has been caught from Nature; but with too little precision, the perspective of the retiring ranks of cloud being missed.

Are our village children taught at present to sing the evening hymn in such an obstreperous manner as to frighten the geese?

[1] [Alfred Rankley (1819–1872), whose work first appeared at the Academy in 1841, was a constant exhibitor of pictures of domestic genre.]

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369. LUFF, BOY! (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

War with France? It may be; and they say good ships are building at Cherbourg. War with Russia? That also is conceivable;[1] and the Russians invent machines that explode under water by means of knobs. War with the fiend in ourselves? That may not so easily come to pass, he and we being in close treaty hitherto, yet perhaps in good time may be looked for. And against enemies, foreign or internal, French, Sclavonic, or demoniac, what arms have we to count upon? I hear of good artillery practice at Woolwich; of new methods of sharpening sabres invented by Sikhs; of a modern condition of the blood of Nessus, which sets sails on fire, and makes an end of herculean ships,[2] like phœnixes. All which may perhaps be well, or perhaps ill, for us. But if our enemies want to judge of our proved weapons and armour, let them come and look here. Bare head, bare fist, bare foot, and blue jacket! If these will not save us, nothing will!

A glorious picture—most glorious!—"Hempen bridle, and horse of tree."[3] Nay, rather, backs of the blue horses, foam-fetlocked, rearing beside us as we ride, tossing their tameless crests, with deep-drawn thunder in their overtaking tread. I wonder if Mr. Hook when he drew that boy thought of the Elgin Marbles;[4] the helmetless, unsworded, unarmoured men of Marathon. I think not; the likeness is too lovely to be conscious: it is all the more touching. They also, the men of Marathon, horsemen riding upon

[1] [The state of public feeling at this time, with its fear of foreign complications, is shown in Tennyson's lines "Riflemen, Form!" which appeared in the *Times* of May 9, 1859.]

[2] [The reference is apparently to various experiments in the manufacture of explosives—some of them on the lines of "Greek Fire"—which were in progress at this time. For the shirt of Nessus, which was pierced by a poisoned arrow and thus acquired the deadly charm that was destined to make an end of Hercules, see Sophocles, *Trach.*, 740 *seq.*

[3] [Compare *Harbours of England*, § 42, Vol. XIII. p. 49.]

[4] ["Finding," says Mr. Hook's biographer, "his best models in the Elgin Marbles, he studied them diligently and heartily, and from them gained not a little of that sense of style, love of simplicity, largeness and breadth of design, and that reliance on thoroughness, which characterize the best art of all kinds, and have always distinguished his pictures."—F. G. Stephens, *J. C. Hook: His Life and Work*, p. 4.]

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horses, given them of the Sea God. The earth struck by the trident takes such shape—a white wave, with its foaming mane and its crested head, made living for them.

And the quiet steersman, too, with his young brow knit, to whom father and brother are trusted—and more than they. I would we had such faithful arms, however feeble, at all helms.

Infinite thanks, Mr. Hook, for this; for our "Brook of Human Life" also (250), and our "Hours of Listless Sway on Gentle Wave" (493). All of them beautiful. The distant landscape in that brook scene is one of the sweetest ever found by painter—for found it evidently is, not composed; as well as Mr. Redgrave's beautiful distance in 218.[1]

390. Barley Harvest. (*H. C. Whaite.*[2])

Very exquisite in nearly every respect; perhaps, take it all in all, the most covetable bit of landscape of this year, and showing good promise, it seems to me, if the painter does not overwork himself needlessly. The execution of the whole by minute and similar touches is a mistake. Certain textures need to be so produced, and certain complexities of form; but the work is never good unless it varies with every part of the subject, and is different in method, according to the sort of surface or form required. Nothing finished can be done without labour; but a picture can hardly be more injured than by the quantity of labour

[1] [No. 250 was described in the catalogue by Tennyson's lines from *The Brook*:—

"And out again I curve and flow,
To join the brimming river;
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever."

"A cart with an old man and a young man in it is entering the shallow stream which is spanned by a rustic wooden bridge. Over this a young woman passes, caressing a baby; while, leaning on a handrail, a country boy is talking to the young man. The moral of the design is distinct, and could not but give significance of those earthly shows of beauty which, although men may come and men may go, are for ever renewed" (F. G. Stephens, *Monograph on J. C. Hook*, p. 22). No. 493 was entitled "The Skipper Ashore." No. 218, by R. Redgrave, R.A., was "The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home."]

[2] [H. Clarence Whaite, now member of the Royal Water-Colour Society, and President of the Royal Cambrian Academy.]

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in it which is lost. Uncontributive toil is one of the forms of ruin.

Mr. Whaite's drawing, 1001 ["Snowdon"], is also very lovely in conception, and right in form of cloud. It is slightly affected by the same error as the oil-painting. Compare with it the interesting study opposite, by Mr. A. W. Hunt (997. "On the Greta"), entirely well meant, but suffering under the same oppression of plethoric labour. I do not often, in the present state of the English school, think it advisable to recommend "breadth"; but assuredly both Mr. Whaite and Mr. Hunt, if they wish to do themselves justice, ought to give up colour for a little while, and work with nothing but very ill-made charcoal which will not cut to a point.

While we are examining these minor landscapes, it is worth while returning to the west room to glance at Mr. J. S. Raven's "Saintfoin in Bloom" (574), which is more easy in touch, and very harmonious in the light and shade of the figures;[1] and at Mr. Oakes's richly but vainly wrought foreground, with nothing beyond it. (525. "Marchllyn-Mawr: 'A solitary Pool, fringed round with rushes wild.'")

Mr. Boyce's "The East Lynn at Middleham" (682) is of higher temper. It is curious how few people seem to feel the solemn difference between sun and shade—in the breadth of both, which he has endeavoured to render there. Many other studies of great interest may be found scattered on the walls, in which, while there is much to be admired, this is generally to be regretted, that the painters, not being able to do their work entirely well, think to make progress by doing a great quantity of work moderately well, which will by no means answer the purpose. We cannot learn to paint leaves by painting trees-full, nor grass by painting fields-full. Learning to paint one leaf rightly is better than constructing a whole forest of leaf definitions.

[1] [John Samuel Raven (1829–1877), exhibited at the Academy from 1849. He was strongly influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite movement, his later works being characterised by elaboration of detail and strong poetical feeling. An exhibition of his works was held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1878.]

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441. God's Gothic. (*Miss A. Blunden.*)

An entirely earnest and very notable study. It looks hard at first (and indeed *is* a little hard at last), but the appearance of too conspicuous green in the sea, which principally causes the harshness, will be found to diminish after a steady look; the fact being that the sea is often of this colour, only the bright sunlight of Nature, which no painting can equal, accounts for it to our sensations. But if Miss Blunden can make her handling a little more tender, the colour may be as bright without looking wrong. She has tried hard, not without fair success, to express the rise of the wave—hardly visible in the long swell—till the foam shows at its edge; the wet shingle is also very good; the boat well drawn; and the beds of pointed "Gothic" wonderfully true in bend, as well as various in colour.

480. The Burgesses of Calais. (*H. Holiday.*)

A well-conceived and interesting scene:[1] the face of the knight successful; that of the wife is a little beyond the painter's strength. It is a fair representation of the class of pictures now produced in numbers by the advancing school, which, with considerable merit, have the general demerit of making us feel in an instant that they would never have been painted had not others shown how; and the greater demerit of slightly blunting the enjoyment of the work of original men. Nevertheless, in every school these engrafted pictures must exist; and it is a cause for sincere congratulation when the habit, which is becoming derivatively universal, is to read human nature and history with sympathy for nobleness and desire for truth.

[1] [A.D. 1347. "Then the kinge sayde . . . let syxe of the chiefe burgesses of the towne come out bareheaded, barefooted, barelegged, and in their shirtes, with halters about their neckes, with the kayes of the towne and castell in their handes, and let them syxe yelde themselfe purely to my wyll, and the residue I will take to mercye."—Froissart's *Chronicles.*]

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492. The Rev. F. D. Maurice. (*L. Dickinson.*[1])

Like, and good; an entirely well-meant and well-wrought portrait; coming a little hard, in consequence of the endeavour to paint all the expression of an expressive face: but it is a good fault. Our portraits are in general wanting in power, owing to a misunderstanding of Sir Joshua, and the idea that his playful tenderness and easy precision are imitable by slovenliness.

Generally speaking, portraiture may be divided into three great schools: the greatest is the Venetian, headed by Titian, and entirely right; on one side of it, is the German school, headed by Holbein, erring slightly on the side of intenseness and force of definition; on the other side of it, the English school, headed by Sir Joshua, erring slightly on the side of facility and grace of abstraction.* Now, the Venetians and Sir Joshua are, for the present, wholly inimitable; but Holbein is imitable, and is the best model for us.[2]

609. The King's Orchard.[3] (*A. Hughes.*)

Mr. Hughes's exquisite sense of colour and delicacy

* For the sake of simplicity of conception, Velasquez must be classed with the Venetians, to whom he belongs in right of his style, and Vandyck with the English; in fact, he, with Sir Joshua and Gainsborough, constitute the whole school.

[1] [Lowes Dickinson, the well-known portrait-painter, was a friend of Maurice, and took drawing-classes at the Working Men's College at the same time as Ruskin. See Vol. V. p. xxxviii.]

[2] [In connexion with this classification of portrait-painters, see, for Titian and the Venetians, *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 193) and compare a passage above, p. 118; for Holbein's portraiture, the paper on "Sir Joshua and Holbein," §§ 12, 13, and *Ariadne Florentina*, §§ 171, 177; for Sir Joshua's "unerring insight, erring though slightly on the side of facility," see *The Two Paths*, § 63, and compare *The Art of England*, § 65.]

[3] [The picture was suggested by *Pippa Passes*:—

"And peasants sing how once a certain page
Pined for the grace of her so far above
His power of doing good to, 'Kate the Queen—
'She never could be wronged, be poor,' he sighed,
'Need him to help her!'"

In the Academy Catalogue, Browning's lines were unkindly printed as prose.]

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of design are seen to less advantage than usual. He has been allowing himself to go astray by indulging too much in his chief delight of colour; and this picture, which was quite lovely when I saw it last year incomplete, is now throughout too gay, and wanting in sweetness of shade, but most accomplished and delicious in detached passages; and the apple-blossom, among all its ruddy rivals on the walls this year, is tenderly, but triumphantly, victorious—it is the only blossom which is soft enough in texture, or round enough in bud. There is the making of a magnificent painter in Mr. Hughes; but he must for some time yet stoop to conquer—be content with cottagers' instead of kings' orchards, and bow to the perhaps distressing but assured fact, that a picture can be no more wholly splendid than it can be wholly white.

900. Too Late.[1] (*W. L. Windus.*)

Something wrong here: either this painter has been ill;* or his picture has been sent in to the Academy in a hurry; or he has sickened his temper and dimmed his sight by reading melancholy ballads. There is great grandeur in the work; but it cannot for a moment be compared with "Burd Helen."[2] On the whole, young painters must remember this great fact, that painting, as a mere physical exertion, requires the utmost possible strength of constitution and of heart. A stout arm, a calm mind, a merry

* I fear this has been the fact. See the Postscript at the end of these pages [p. 239].

[1] [The picture was illustrated in the catalogue by Tennyson's lines:—

"If it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest;
Wed whom thou wilt; but I am sick of time,
And I desire to rest."]

[2] [See above, p. 85.]

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heart, and a bright eye are essential to a great painter. Without all these he can, in a great and immortal way, do nothing.

Wherefore, all puling and pining over deserted ladies, and knights run through the body, is, to the high artistic faculty, just so much poison. Frequent the company of right-minded and nobly-souled persons; learn all athletic exercises, and all delicate arts—music more especially; torment yourself neither with fine philosophy nor impatient philanthropy—but be kind and just to everybody; rise in the morning with the lark,[1] and whistle in the evening with the blackbird; and in time you may be a painter. Not otherwise.

908. VAL D'AOSTA.[2] (*J. Brett.*)

Yes, here we have it at last—some close-coming to it at least—historical landscape, properly so called—landscape painting with a meaning and a use. We have had hitherto plenty of industry, precision quite unlimited; but all useless, or nearly so, being wasted on scenes of no majesty or enduring interest. Here is, at last, a scene worth painting—painted with all our might (not quite with all our heart, perhaps, but with might of hand and eye). And here, accordingly, for the first time in history, we have, by help of art, the power of visiting a place, reasoning about it, and knowing it, just as if we were there, except only that we cannot stir from our place, nor look behind us. For the rest, standing before this picture is just as good as standing on that spot in Val d'Aosta, so far as gaining of knowledge is concerned; and perhaps in some degree pleasanter, for it would be very hot on that rock to-day, and there would probably be a disagreeable smell of juniper plants growing on the slopes above.

[1] [For other references to this counsel, see Vol. XIII. p. 137 *n.*]
[2] [The view of the valley was taken near the village of Villeneuve.]

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So if any simple-minded, quietly-living person, indisposed towards railroad stations or crowded inns, cares to know in an untroublous and uncostly way what a Piedmontese valley is like in July, there it is for him. Rocks overlaid with velvet and fur to stand on in the first place: if you look close into the velvet you will find it is jewelled and set with stars in a stately way. White poplars by the roadside, shaking silvery in the wind: I regret to say the wind is apt to come up the Val d'Aosta in an ill-tempered and rude manner, turning leaves thus the wrong side out; but it will be over in a moment. Beyond the poplars you may see the slopes of arable and vineyard ground, such as give the wealth and life to Italy which she idly trusts in—ground laid ages ago in wreaths, like new cut hay by the mountain streams, now terraced and trimmed into all gentle service. If you want to know what vines look like under Italian training (far from the best), *that* is the look of them—the dark spots and irregular cavities, seen through the broken green of their square-set ranks, distinguishing them at any distance from the continuous pale fields of low-set staff and leaf, divided by no gaps of gloom, which clothe a true vine country. There, down in the mid-valley, you see what pasture and meadow land we have, we Piedmontese, with our hamlet and cottage life, and groups of glorious wood. Just beyond the rock are two splendid sweet chestnut trees, with forming fruit, good for making bread of, no less than maize; lower down, far to the left, a furlong or two of the main stream with its white shore and alders: not beautiful, for it has come down into all this fair country from the Courmayeur glaciers, and is yet untamed, cold, and furious, incapable of rest. But above, there is rest, where the sunshine streams into iridescence through branches of pine, and turns the pastures into strange golden clouds, half grass, half dew; for the shadows of the great hills have kept the dew there since morning. Rest also, calm enough, among the ridges of rock and forest that heap themselves into that purple pyramid high on the right. Look well into the making

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of it—it is indeed so that a great mountain is built and bears itself, and its forest fringes, and village jewels—for those white spots far up the ravine are villages—and peasant dynasties are hidden among the film of blue. And above all are other more desolate dynasties—the crowns that cannot shake—of jagged rock; they also true and right, even to their finest serration. So it is that the snow lies on those dark diadems for ever.[1] A notable picture truly; a possession of much within a few feet square.

Yet not, in the strong, essential meaning of the word, a noble picture. It has a strange fault, considering the school to which it belongs—it seems to me wholly emotionless. I cannot find from it that the painter loved, or feared, anything in all that wonderful piece of the world. There seems to me no awe of the mountains there—no real love of the chestnuts or the vines. Keenness of eye and fineness of hand as much as you choose; but of emotion, or of intention, nothing traceable. Not but that I believe the painter to be capable of the highest emotion: any one who can

[1] [It may be interesting to read in connexion with this passage Ruskin's impressions of the Val d'Aosta. The passage occurs in a letter to his father from Ivrea, August 26, 1851 :—

"I was more than satisfied yesterday of the justice of the Val d'Aosta's reputation. We came some fifty miles through scenery of continually increasing magnificence. The part just below Aosta is comparatively uninteresting, but from Chatillon here it is far more wonderful as *rock* scenery than anything I have seen among the Alps. There are no *glaciered* mountains; therefore it is not altogether in my way, but the rocks rise from the level of the plain of Piedmont until their tops are sprinkled with snow, giving a clear height of at least 8000 feet, and this attained not in the unbroken precipices which the eye never can measure, but in rolling curves of massy crag, divided into myriads of knolls and ravines and minor precipices—a perfect world of winding glen and iron rock, which as it descends into the valley is literally roofed over with continuous trellises of vines, only here and there a huge fallen mass of the size of the hull of a ship of the line lying in the midst of the green ranges of trellis and clusters of grapes, and sometimes a bank of turf shadowed with huge chestnut trees, springing out four and five trunks in a cluster, and as if that were not enough, throwing forth from their roots whole clusters of saplings and large-leaved copse of jagged green. Fort Bard is an ugly fort in itself, but on the noblest rock I ever saw—so *clean* and pure, no dusty fractures or débris, but velvet brown lichenous surface and mighty chasms between the bastions, and the mountains on each side all the same, up to their crests."]

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paint thus must have passion within him; but the passion here is assuredly not out of him. He has cared for nothing, except as it was more or less pretty in colour and form. I never saw the mirror so held up to Nature;[1] but it is Mirror's work, not Man's. This absence of sentiment is peculiarly indicated by the feeble anger of the sky. Had it been wholly cloudless—burning down in one calm field of light behind the purple hills, all the rest of the landscape would have been gathered into unity by its repose; and for the sleeping girl we should have feared no other disturbance than the bleating of the favourite of her flock, who has returned to seek her—his companions wandering forgetful. But now she will be comfortlessly waked by hailstorm in another quarter of an hour: and yet there is no majesty in the clouds, nor any grand incumbency of them on the hills; they are but a dash of mist, gusty and disagreeable enough—in no otherwise to be dreaded; highly un-divine clouds — incognizant of Olympus — what have they to do here upon the hill thrones—*κορυφαῖς ἱεραῖς χιονοβλήτοισι.*[2]

Historical landscape it is, unquestionably; meteorological also; poetical—by no means: yet precious, in its patient way; and, as a wonder of toil and delicate handling, unimpeachable. There is no such subtle and precise work on any other canvas here. The chestnut trees are like a finished design of Dürer's — every leaf a study; the poplar trunks and boughs drawn with an unexampled exquisiteness of texture and curve. And if it does not touch you at first, stay by it a little; look well at the cottage among the meadows; think of all that this Italian life might be among these sacred hills, and of what Italian life has been, and yet is, in spite of silver crosses on the breast, and how far it is your fault and mine that this is so,—and the picture may be serviceable to you in quite

[1] [*Hamlet*, iii. 2.]
[2] [Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, line 270.]

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other ways than by pleasing your eyes with purple and gold.[1]

[1] [This picture (reproduced as frontispiece to this volume), which was bought by Ruskin, was lent in 1880 to an exhibition at Douglas. Ruskin then supplied the following Note in the catalogue (described in Vol. XIII. p. lvi.):—

"Painted in the summer of 1858. When I was myself in Italy, Mr. Brett visited me at Turin to consult about this picture, which he was then painting from the window of his lodgings, in a grand castle half-way up the valley between Aosta and Courmayeur. I at that time hoped much from his zeal and fineness of minute execution in realizing, with Dürer-like precision, the detail of Swiss landscape. Had he sympathized enough with Swiss and Italian life, his work might have become of extreme value; but, instead, he took to mere photography of physical landscape, and gradually lost both precision and sentiment. How lovely an old-fashioned Swiss or Italian village would have been, painted like this single cottage, some future disciple of the school may consider and hope to show. There is no pretence of composition, or, as usually understood, of painter's skill in this picture. It is the careful delineation of what is supposed to be beautiful in itself; and it has lost, instead of benefited, by the unwise introduction of storm on the hills for the sake of variety. In good, permanent, and honourably finished oil-painting this picture cannot be surpassed; it is as safe as a piece of china, and as finished as the finest engraving."

For the personal reminiscences of 1858, here referred to, see above, Introduction, pp. xxiii., xxiv.; and for a criticism of the picture, made by Millais at the time of its first exhibition, see above, p. 22 *n.*]

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# POSTSCRIPT

It is one of the most difficult and painful duties which I have to perform in these *Notes*, to guard the public against supposing that works executed under circumstances accidentally unfavourable are characteristic of a school, without at the same time hurting the artist's feelings deeply, just when all discouragement is most dangerous to him. I cannot, in justice to the Pre-Raphaelite school, allow Mr. Windus's picture—he being one of its chief leaders—to be looked upon as an example of what that school may achieve; but I trust that he will accept the assurance of my deep respect for his genius, and of my conviction that, with returning strength, he may one day take highest rank among masters of expression.

By inadvertency, I omitted in the arrangement of these detached *Notes* the reference made to Mr. Campbell's wonderful and all but perfect study, "Our Village Clockmaker" (14), full of various power, but perhaps challenging difficulties of detail too manifestly; and to Mr. Calderon's "Lost and Found"[1] (634), which, if the face of the mother had been but a little more beautiful, would have been one of the most touching, as it is one of the most able, pictures of the year.

I cannot criticise my friend Mr. Watts's picture, "Isabella" (438); it is full of beauty and thoughtfulness. I have no doubt that he knows its faults better than I do;

[1] [Called in the catalogue, "French Peasants finding their Stolen Child."]



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and they are so slight that the public ought not to see them, but to admire it with all their hearts.[1]

[1] [Ruskin's friendship with Watts was of long standing. See Vol. XI. p. 30 *n.*, where, in the third volume of *Stones of Venice* (1853), he referred to Watts as the "only one painter who is capable of design in colour on a large scale," etc. In the third volume of *Modern Painters* (1856) Watts's work is referred to as "the dawn of a new era in art, in a true unison of the grotesque with the realistic power" (Vol. V. p. 137). Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, in her *Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning*, has published some letters of Ruskin to Watts (dated 1860, 1861, and 1866), full of warm friendship and sympathetic, if candid, criticism: these are reprinted below, pp. 471–473. In the *Academy Notes* of 1875 there was some published criticism of a like kind (below, p. 266). The second lecture of *The Art of England* (1884) was devoted to Watts and Burne-Jones as representative of "Mythic Schools of Painting." A wreath of laurel sent by Watts lay at the head of Ruskin's coffin.]

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# WATER-COLOUR SOCIETIES

A SOMEWHAT singular circumstance has taken place this year, in the choice of their principal or master piece by two important societies of English artists.

The Society of British Artists placed, as the central attraction of their rooms, an illustration of Shakespeare.* The New Water-Colour Society honoured with a similarly central position an illustration of Tennyson.†

Duly allowing for privileges of seniority and presidentship, it would not be just towards either body of artists if we supposed that the places assigned to these works of art were entirely trustworthy indications of the estimate formed of them. But whether promoted by law, by courtesy, or by admiration, those pictures stood forth to the English—and more than the English—public as in some central or typical way exponents of the power of the two societies; and foreigners, at least, would be justified in concluding that the sanction given by two important bodies of English painters to these readings of the greatest dead and greatest living English poets, indicated with some truth the measure of general understanding of poetry in the artist mind of the country; and perhaps also (as the

* No. 53. "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" (F. Y. Hurlstone).

† No. 212. "A Dream of Fair Women" (E. H. Corbould). The illustrations of Shakespeare by Mr. Gilbert, which occupy a conspicuous position (on each side of Mr. Burton's centre piece) in the rooms of the Old Water-Colour Society, curiously involve that society also in a parallel manifestation of opinion.[1]

[1] [No. 125. "Sir Andrew Aguecheek writes a Challenge," and No. 132. "The Banquet at Lucentio's House."]



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appeal to public judgment was made so frankly) something of the public mind of this country on the same matter.

I am not going to criticise those pictures. If the reader is not of my mind about them, I should not have any hope of being able to make him so—nor even any wish to make him so. If he *is* of my mind about them, he will understand why they should have set me thinking—not on the whole pleasurably—of the course and probable prospects of the curious group of English personages to whom art now addresses itself. For it would not be difficult to show, if necessary, that these two works do verily express the final and entirely typical issue of the most popular modern views on the subject of poetry in general: and more than this, there is a certain typical character even in the hero and heroines of the pictures—the "Hamlet" not unworthily representing what is popularly considered as Philosophy; the "Jephthah's Daughter"[1] what is popularly accepted as Piety; and the "Cleopatra" what is popularly displayed as Splendour.

Or, in a nearer and narrower view, these pictures contain a concentrated expression of the character which distinguishes a modern English exhibition of paintings from every other that has yet been, or is likely to be. Bad painting is to be found in abundance everywhere, so that we do not distinguish ourselves by our weakness; foolish painting in greater abundance still, so that we do not distinguish ourselves by our imbecility; more or less meritorious painting, at least in all principal French and German schools, as well as in ours, so that we do not distinguish ourselves by our merit: but purely and wholly vulgar painting is not to be found developing itself elsewhere with the same *naïveté* as among the English; and we *do* distinguish ourselves by our vulgarity. So, at least, it appears to me. As I have just said, I do not wish to argue with

[1] ["Jephthah's Daughter" and "Cleopatra" were among the figures in Corbould's illustration of Tennyson's poem.]

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any one who disputes the fact, but to trace thence one or two conclusions with those who admit it.

What vulgarity is, whether in manners, acts, or conceptions, most well-educated persons understand; but what it consists in, or arises from, is a more difficult question.[1] I believe that on strict analysis it will be found definable as "the habit of mind and act resulting from the prolonged combination of insensibility with insincerity";* and I think the special manifestation of it among artists has resulted, in the first place, from the withdrawal of all right, and therefore, all softening, or animating motive for their work; and, in the second place, from the habit of assuming, or striving by rule to express, feelings which did not, and could not, arise out of their work under such conditions.

I say first, by the withdrawal of all softening or animating motive, and chiefly by the loss of belief in the spiritual world. Art has never shown, in any corner of the earth, a condition of advancing strength but under this influence. I do not say, observe, influence of "religion," but merely of a belief in some invisible power—god or goddess, fury or fate, saint or demon. Where such belief existed, however sunk or distorted, progressive art has been possible,

* It would be more accurate to say, "constitutional insensibility"; for people are born vulgar, or not vulgar, irrevocably. An apparent insensibility may often be caused by one strong feeling quenching or conquering another; and this to the extent of involving the person in all kinds of cruelty and crime: yet, Borgia or Ezzelin, lady and knight still; while the born clown is dead in all sensation and capacity of thought, whatever his acts or life may be.

Cloten, in *Cymbeline*, is the most perfect study of pure vulgarity which I know in literature; Perdita, in *Winter's Tale*, the most perfect study of its opposite (irrespective of such higher virtue or intellect as we have in Desdemona or Portia). Perdita's exquisite openness, joined with as exquisite sensitiveness, constitute the precise opposite of the apathetic insincerity which, I believe, is the essence of vulgarity.[2]

[1] [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. pp. 117–118), and vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii., "Of Vulgarity"; *Elements of Drawing*, § 240; *Sesame and Lilies*, § 28; and *Art of England*, § 161.]

[2] [For Lucrezia Borgia, see *Two Paths*, § 187; for Ezzelin, Vol. XII. p. 137 *n.*; for Cloten (as a contrast to Imogen), *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 112); for Perdita, *ibid.* (Vol. V. p. 99), and vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 442).]

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otherwise impossible.[1] The distortion of the belief, its contraction or its incoherence, contract or compress the resultant art; still the art is evermore of another and mightier race than the art of materialism. Be so much of a Pythagorean as to believe in something awful and impenetrable connected with beans, and forthwith you are not weaker, but stronger, than your kitchenmaid, who perceives in them only an adaptability to being boiled. Be so much of an Egyptian as to believe that some god made hawks, and bears up their wings for them on the wind, and looks for ever through the fierce light of their eyes, that therefore it is not good to slay hawks, and some day you may be able to paint a hawk quite otherwise than will be possible to you by any persistency in slaughter or dissection, or help of any quantity of stuffing and glass beads in thorax or eye-socket. Be so much of a Jew as to believe that there is a great Spirit who makes the tempests his true messengers, and the flaming fire his true servant, and lays the beams of his chambers upon the unshrinking sea,[2] and you will paint the cloud, and the fire, and the wave, otherwise, and on the whole better, than in any state of modern enlightenment as to the composition of caloric or protoxide of hydrogen. Or, finally, be so much of a human creature as to care about the heart and history of fellow-creatures, and to take so much concern with the facts of human life going on around you as shall make your art in some sort compassionate, exhortant, or communicative, and useful to any one coming after you, either as a record of what was done among men in your day, or as a testimony of what you felt or knew concerning them and their misdoings or undoings,—and this love and dwelling in the spirits of other creatures will give a glory to your work quite unattainable by observance of any proportions of arms and collar-bones hitherto stated

[1] [With the following passage—a central one in Ruskin's writings—compare (among other places where he insists on religion in this sense—of the recognition of spiritual being—as the root of great and progressive art), *Lectures on Art*, §§ 37 *seq.*; *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 70); *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 6).]

[2] [Psalms civ. 3, 4.]

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by professors of Man-painting. All this is irrevocably so; and since, as a nation concerning itself with art, we have wholly rejected these heathenish, Jewish, and other such beliefs—and have accepted, for things worshipful, absolutely nothing but pairs of ourselves—taking for exclusive idols, gods, or objects of veneration the infinitesimal points of humanity, Mr. and Mrs. P., and the Misses and Master P.'s, —out, I say, of this highly punctuated religion, which comes to its full stop and note of admiration after the family name, we shall get nothing, *can* get nothing, but such issues as we see here. The whole temper of former art was in some way reverential—had awe in it: no matter how carefully or conventionally the workman ruled and wrought the psalter page, he had every now and then a far-away feeling that it was to be prayed out of—somebody would pray out of it some day—not entirely mechanically, nor by slip of bead. No matter how many Madonnas he painted to order from the same outlines, the sense that the worst of them was sure, late or soon, to be looked up to through tears, could not but thrill through him as he arched the brow and animated the smile: nay, if he was but a poor armourer or enameller, the feeling that those chased traceries of cuish and helmet would be one day embossed in hot purple, deeper, perhaps, through fault of his, would every now and then make his hammer smite with sterner, truer tone—awe and pity ruling over all his doings, such as now are unattainable. For Mr. and Mrs. P. are not in that sense awful—not in that sense pitiable: both—in another and deeper sense, but not in this.

Then the second source of the evil is the endeavour to assume the sentiment which we cannot possibly have. Let us accept our position, and good scientific, or diagrammatic, or politely personal and domestic art is still possible to us —still may be made, if not majestic work, yet real work. There is use in a good geological diagram; and there is good riding in Rotten Row, to be seen any day between four and six; but if we profess to paint ghosts, when we

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believe in no immortality—or Iphigenias and daughters of Jephthah, when we believe in no Deity—this is what we come to: not but that even ghosts are indeed still to be seen, and Iphigenias found (though perhaps sacrificed not altogether to Diana) by sharp-sighted persons—upon occasion.

It may be thought, I speak too seriously—or speak seriously in the wrong place—of this matter. I do not. The pictures are ludicrous enough. That which they signify is not ludicrous. And, as if to make us think out their signification fully, the Tennyson picture has a companion—an opposite at least—another illustration of English poetry by English art: the gate of Eden, with a Peri at it—an interesting scene to people who believe in Eden.[1] We suppose ourselves to be rather nearer that gate—do not we? —than any of the old shepherds who saw ladders set to it in their dreams. And this is the aspect assumed by the gate, and the aspect of the angels in—or outside of it—upon such closer acquaintance. A "strait gate" truly.[2]

This being so, I cannot enter with any pleasure into examination of the works of the two Water-Colour Societies this year. For in their very nature those two societies appeal to the insensitiveness and pretence of the public: insensitiveness, because no refined eye could bear with the glaring colours, and blotted or dashed forms, which are the staple of modern water-colour work; and pretence, because this system of painting is principally supported by the idle amateurs who concern themselves about art without being truly interested in it; and by pupils of the various water-colour masters, who enjoy being taught to sketch brilliantly in six lessons.

In spite of all the apparent exertion, and reflex of Pre-Raphaelite minuteness from the schools above them, the Water-Colour Societies are in steady descent. They were founded first on a true and simple school of broad light and

[1] [New Water-Colour Society, No. 73: "The Peri," by Henry Warren.]
[2] [For the Biblical references, see Genesis xxviii. 12 and Matthew vii. 13.]

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shade — grey touched with golden colour on the lights. This, with clear and delicate washes for its transparent tones, was the method of all the earlier men; and the sincere love of Nature which existed in the hearts of the first water-colour masters—Girtin, Cozens, Robson, Copley Fielding, Cox, Prout, and De Wint—formed a true and progressive school, till Hunt, the greatest of all, perfected his art. Hunt and Cox alone are left of all that group, and their works in the Old Water-Colour are the only ones which are now seriously worth looking at; for in the endeavour to employ new resources, to rival oil colour, and to display facility, mere method has superseded all feeling and all wholesome aim, and has itself become finally degraded.[1] The sponge and handkerchief have destroyed water-colour painting; and I believe there are now only two courses open to its younger students—either to "hark back" at once to the old grey schools, and ground themselves again firmly on chiaroscuro studies with the flat grey wash, or to take William Hunt for their only master, and resolve that they will be able to paint a piece of leafage and fruit approximately well in his way before they try even the smallest piece of landscape. If they want to follow Turner, the first course is the only one. Steady grey and yellow for ten years, and lead pencil point all your life, or no "Turnerism."[2] No "dodge" will ever enable you otherwise to get round that corner. Those are the terms of the thing; we may accept or not as we choose, but there are no others. I name, however, a few of the works in the rooms of the two societies which are at least indicative of power to do well, if the painters choose.

In the New Water-Colour, Mr. E. G. Warren's[3] "Lost in the Woods" (88), and "Avenue, Evelyn Wood" (228), are good instances of deceptive painting—scene-painting on

[1] [Compare Vol. XIII. p. 247.]

[2] [Compare Vol. XIII. pp. 241–249, 260, etc.]

[3] [Edmund G. Warren (*b.* 1834), a son of Henry Warren, who was for many years President of the Society; he was elected an Associate in 1852, and full Member in 1856.]

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a small scale—the treatment of the light through the leaf interstices being skilfully correspondent with photographic effects. There is no refined work or feeling in them, but they are careful and ingenious; and their webs of leafage are pleasant fly-traps to draw public attention, which, perhaps, after receiving, Mr. Warren may be able to justify by work better worthy of it.

In Mr. S. Cook's "Hartland Point" (50), the sense of the low trickling of the rivulets of tide through infinite stones is very delightful—alternate rippling and resting of the confined, shallow, wandering water, that hardly will be at the trouble of getting down through the shingle, when it has to come up again over it soon. There are beautiful passages of atmosphere in this, as in all Mr. Cook's drawings this year. The companion studies of morning and evening, on the same cliff (2 and 6), suggest a pretty idea, but not quite successfully.[1] The contrast is not carried far enough in minor details.

Mr. W. Telbin's[2] "Dovedale" (208) is very delightful: on the whole it seems to me the sweetest and rightest thing in the room, but scattered in subject. A pretty place, certainly, but incoherent; neither dark nor light, quiet nor disquieted, tame nor wild, but tenderly chaotic and insipid —suggestive, to me at least, of nothing but going on to see if nothing better is to be found. The sensation, perhaps, is increased by the oval shape—not a wise one for a landscape, where one wants to know accurately the difference between slope and vertical, as bearing much on the sublimities of some things, and the moral characters of others.

Lastly, Mr. Rowbotham's "East Cliff, Hastings" (268) is an earnest and admirable study; strong in discipline, and full of fact, but hard. Neither the sweetest colours nor the subtlest forms have been seen—in fact, the heart of

[1] [No. 2, "Close of Day," No. 6, "Early Summer Morning," both "West Coast of Cornwall."]

[2] [William Telbin, born 1812, elected a member of the New Society 1839, died 1873.]

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the cliff is not opened yet; but its muscular development is right. Yet it is costly drawing this, in attention, considering what water-colour work is usually; and the timbers and other *matériel* are well set in serviceable places. The painter must have felt himself braced after such work, and forwarded, in many ways.

In the rooms of the Old Water-Colour Society, the first thing to be looked at should be Mr. Hunt's marvellous fruit piece, No. 261 ["A Pine-apple and Grapes"]. It seems to me almost the exquisitest I have ever seen, in the glowing grey of the bosses of the pine and sweeping curves of its leaves. After that, David Cox's magnificent waterfall,[1] at the upper end of the room—unsurpassable in its own broad way, and giving, in the foam, examples of execution as broad as Salvator's, and infinitely more subtle and lovely. Then, everything else of David Cox's in the room, especially 274 ["Twilight"]. Next, Mr. A. P. Newton's "Snow Scene" (181), which is very good; but the good of it might be got in a daguerreotype as well, and Mr. Newton can do better than a daguerreotype if he likes. We may well, however, look for his drawings round the room; all have something in them. The Inverness-shire moonlight (213) ["Inverlochy Castle"] is especially good. And then follow round Mr. Naftel (who has made swift advance this year), in the same way, beginning with the beautiful bit of retiring mountain and glittering fern, No. 183; and staying long at No. 44,[2] a notable study of smooth-sculptured torrent bed and flushed hillside. Look also at the rolling clouds in Mr. W. Turner's "Ben Cruachan" (48), which are the truest clouds in the whole room. Then, give as much time as you can to Mr. S. P. Jackson's "Bamborough" (170), and to Mr. W. C. Smith's "Chillon" (91);

[1] [No. 73. No title, but the following lines from Thomson :—

"Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes
From the rude mountain and the mossy wild,
Trembling through rocks abrupt."]

[2] [183. "Grouse, or Blackcock: Study in Glen Falloch." 44. "Head of Loch Lomond, with Ben Lomond in the distance."]

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both of them quiet and sincere.[1] Chillon, the least bit too red; but the purple towers in shade very good, and the gradations of light in the distance admirable. And it must not be through any importunity of mine if you stay longer; for the rest of the works here are, indeed, some very pretty, and some entertaining, and many very clever, but hardly, so far as I see, calculated either to form our taste or advance our knowledge.

[1] [William Collingwood Smith (1815-1887) was elected a member of the Society in 1849. A collection of his works was exhibited there after his death. Examples may be seen in the South Kensington Museum. For another reference to him, see Vol. XIII. p. 345.]

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# FRENCH EXHIBITION

6. CHERRY-SELLER OF PORT L'ABBÉ, BRITTANY.

Very powerful and systematic in handling; right in form and gesture, and, up to its attempted point, in colour—only the beauty of girls and cherries missed. French girls, the sweetest-tempered living creatures in the world, are not obliged to Monsieur Antigna[1] for his representation of their countenances to the English, as they appear either here or in No. 5 opposite (also a clever work); while "The Pet Squirrel" (4), though full of power, is entirely ignoble in its conception of girlhood. Respecting No. 1,[2] it seems to me, we English might ask—"Is it so rare a thing in France to hold your umbrella over somebody else in a shower as to induce the person so generously protected always to kiss the hem of your robe?" I carried a bag of nuts, as big as an ordinary coal-sack, a mile up hill, from hedge to home, for a tired Lucernoise old woman the other day, getting in return kind thanks indeed, but no pictorial effects of this kind.

57. THE TOILET. (*Edouard Frère.*)

This, with 59 and 60,[3] is worthy of the painter, which is saying much; but there is no advance on previous effort. The "Student," exhibited in 1857, contained higher qualities of painting than any shown in the pictures of this year; and, which is a matter of much sorrow to me, I think the faces are on the whole less lovely than they were—quite as

[1] [Alexandre Antigna (1818–1878), pupil of Delaroche, French genre painter.]
[2] [1. "Sympathy and Gratitude." 5. "Brittany: Girls at a Fountain."]
[3] [59. "Artisan's Family." 60. "Cut Finger."]



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right and deep in expression, but some of their pure beauty lost: this is especially so in the face of the taller girl in 61.[1]

I hear some complaints among the art-talk of the year respecting the "monotony" of Frère's pictures. But rustic life is not, it should be remembered, on the whole an exciting matter. The superiors of the poor rustics occasionally procure them some excitement—in the way of roof-burning, or starvation, or bayonet instead of spade agriculture—with supply of richer manure to their fields than usual. But as Frère has seen it (and he paints only what he has seen), this cottage life, with its morning and evening prayer, and midday pottage, is a quiet business. You will not, I believe, get any disquietude from him. There is plenty brewing for us — subjects for historical painting of dramatic interest enough, on the horizon. For the present, we will give our sympathy to the "Cut Finger," and to the tender little Florence, who binds it up, and be content.

### 91*a*. Bavarian Policemen, etc. (*Louis Knaus.*[2])

A most powerful work, full of entirely right expression, alike in feature and gesture. The distant figures at the opening of the wood are among the most wonderful pieces of complete drawing in a faint tone which I have ever seen; and there is handling in the faces throughout, which, though much inferior to Hogarth in colour, and in deep conception of feeling, approaches him in expressive skill (perhaps there is more resemblance to him in the companion picture, 91*c*, than in this). The painting is everywhere vigorous but fails, as I have said, in colour, especially in the flesh. Gipsies have indeed dark skins, but they have bright life

[1] [61. "Wood Gatherers."]

[2] [Louis Knaus, born at Wiesbaden, 1829, one of the leading genre painters of Germany: In his diary of 1859 at Düsseldorf, Ruskin wrote:—

"Knaus. A true painter. His 'Gamblers' in the Academy here show as much power as the picture in the French Exhibition—the little girl waiting patiently at her father's side, while he is being cheated out of his last groschen by an old—very old—scoundrel to whom the tavern drawer is making signs from behind the duped player."]

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beneath them; here we have only gipsy mahogany, not gipsy blood. The dog and monkey, however, are perfect —I think, in unexaggerated truth of action and expression, better than Landseer's work. A most notable picture it seems to me, though not a profound one; but its superficial qualities are of the rarest kind. The other, 91*b*,[1] is rather deeper—at least in the dignity of the offended and hopeless wife—but it is coarse in colour.

147. A Country Fair in France. (*C. Troyon.*[2])

There is much cleverness in this picture; but it is painted on a totally false principle, which is doing so much mischief to the whole French school that I trust I may be pardoned for pointing it out very distinctly.

Chiaroscuro is a very noble subject of study, but it is not so noble a study as human nature; nor is it the subject which should mainly occupy our thoughts when we have human nature before us. Generally, we ought to see more in man or woman than that their foreheads come dark against the sky, or their petticoats and pantaloons white against it. If we see nothing but this, and think of nothing else in the company of our fellow-creatures but the depth of their shadows, we are assuredly in such insensitive state of mind as must render all true painting impossible to us. It may be the most important thing about a pollard willow that it comes greyly against a cloud, or gloomily out of a pool. But respecting a man, his greyness or opacity is not the principal fact which it is desirable to state of him. If you cannot see his human beauty, and have no sympathy with his mind, don't paint him. Go and paint logs, or stones, or weeds;—you will not, indeed, paint even these at all supremely, for *their* best beauty is also in a sort human: nevertheless you will not insult them, as you do living creatures, by perceiving in them only opacity. Immense harm has been done in this matter by the popular

[1] ["Woman Fetching her Husband from the Beerhouse."]
[2] [Constant Troyon (1810–1865), the celebrated animal-painter.]

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misunderstanding of Rembrandt; for Rembrandt's strength is in rendering of human character—not in chiaroscuro. Rembrandt's chiaroscuro is always forced—generally false, and wholly vulgar; it is in all possible ways inferior, *as* chiaroscuro, to Correggio's, Titian's, Tintoret's, Veronese's, or Velasquez's.[1] But in rendering human character, such as he saw about him, Rembrandt is nearly equal to any of these men; and the real power of him is in his stern and steady touch on lip and brow—seen best in his lightest etchings, or in the lightest parts of the handling of his portraits, the head of the Jew in our own gallery[2] being about as good and thorough work as it is possible to see of his. And when this is so, and the great qualities of character and of form are first secured—after them, and in due subordination to them—chiaroscuro and everything else will come rightly and gloriously. And they always do come in such order: no chiaroscuro ever was good, as such, which was not subordinate to character and to form; and all search after it as a first object ends in the loss of the thing itself so sought. One of our English painters, Constable, professed this pursuit in its simplicity: "Though my pictures should have nothing else, they shall have chiaroscuro." The sacrifice was accepted by the Fates, but the prayer denied. His pictures *had* nothing else; but they had *not* chiaroscuro.[3]

[1] [For the different systems of Rembrandt and Veronese in this matter, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 59), and vol. iv. ch. iii. (Vol. VI. pp. 56 *seq.*). For Rembrandt in the same connexion, see further: *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 237), and *Cestus of Aglaia*, §§ 52–54. For the chiaroscuro of Correggio, see Vol. III. p. 317, and *Lectures on Art*, §§ 164, 183; for that of Titian, *Two Paths*, § 58, and *Lectures on Art*, § 177; of Tintoret, *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. pp. 25, 412), and, again, *Lectures on Art*, § 177.]

[2] [No. 51 in the National Gallery.]

[3] [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 188 *n.*). For other references to Constable (and they should be consulted as supplementing the passage in the text above), see *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. pp. 45, 191); vol. iii. (Vol. V. pp. 162, 171, 423); vol. iv. (Vol. VI. pp. 53, 101); and *Two Paths*, Appendix i.]

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# SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

I SEE no distinctive reason for noting any of the works in the room at Suffolk Street (though many of them meritorious in their usual way), except only Mr. Baxter's[1] "Red Riding Hood" (158), and Mr. T. Roberts's "Child at Play" (48), and "Opinion of the Press" (178). Of these, the first showed, I thought, a great gift of painting, and great feeling for beauty, if the painter will not try to imitate the superficial qualities of Reynolds more than the sterling ones. The two works by Mr. T. Roberts[2] are interesting; not, indeed, for absolute perfection of attainment, but for their fidelity of light and shade. Many pictures are more brilliant; but it is rare to find any so equally studied and harmoniously balanced in all parts—no bits of colour painted at inconsistent times, or in a changed temper, and therefore discordant. Few people would believe, for instance, that the strong orange touch on the girl's shoulder, in No. 48, was indeed the faithful representation of sunlight reflected at that angle from a purple dress; but so it is, and all the other pieces of effect are as earnestly watched and rendered,* and the figure of the little girl very gracefully designed.

It may not be out of place, in noticing the sentiment of No. 178,[3] which is well and graphically expressed, to warn

* Except the extreme distance, which is sunless.

[1] [Charles Baxter (1809–1879), who commenced life as a bookbinder, first exhibited at the Academy in 1834. He became a member of the Society of British Artists in 1842.]

[2] [So in the catalogue of the Exhibition. Misprinted "W. Roberts" in Ruskin's *Notes*.]

[3] [The subject of the drawing was set forth in the catalogue by the following "Extract from Letter": "Mr. —— has just left us. He brought one of the public journals containing a criticism on my dear husband's picture, and a letter from —— declining to complete the purchase. . . . Come as soon as you can, for we are in much trouble."]



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young painters against attaching too much importance to press criticism as an influence on their fortunes. If sharp and telling, it is a disagreeable thing to look at when just damp from the type; and it is certainly in an unpleasantly convenient form for one's friends to carry about in their pockets. But, ultimately, it is quite powerless, except so far as it concurs with general public opinion. I have never yet seen even a bad picture crushed by criticism, much less a good one. The sale of a given work may, indeed, be checked, or prevented; but so it may by a whisper, or a chance touch of the elbow. I have seen more real mischief and definite injury to property done in ten minutes by an idle coxcomb amusing his party, than could possibly be done by all the malice in type that could be got into the journals of a season. The printed malice only makes people look at the picture; the fool's jest makes them pass it. And though public taste is capricious enough—and erroneous enough—so as to make it very difficult to say how it is to be strongly wrought upon, yet let all young painters be assured of this—that *an absolutely good painting is always sure of sale.* If they choose to offend the public by wanton eccentricity, or easily avoidable error, they have only themselves to blame when the public loses its temper, and passes their real merits without notice. The charity of artists is in condescending to please; and they deservedly suffer when they have it not. A great and good musician lowers his voice when he sings in a sick-room, and raises it when he has to fill the theatre; he will sing lightly for the child, and simply for the uninstructed, but nobly and gloriously for all. So also a great painter can show his majesty in nothing more than by securing, in timely gentleness, empire over all hearts. It is only his petulance, or his pride—not his power—which will alienate the eyes of men. If Veronese rose now among us, or Correggio, there would be at first a wondering, attentive silence—not a murmur heard against them; and presently they would make the very streets ring for joy, and every lip laugh with acclamation: not because

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their essential power could be perceived by all—or by one in a thousand of all—but because, up to the point of possible perception, it would be made lovable by all.

I repeat, therefore, to the young painter, in all distinctness and completeness, this assurance: Do your work well, and kindly, and no enemy can harm you. So soon as your picture deserves to be bought, it will be bought. If, indeed, you want to live by your art before you have learned it; or to sell what you know to be worthless, by catching the fancy of the purchaser; or to display your own dexterity, instead of truth in facts; or to preach to people, instead of pleasing them,—in each and all of these cases you must take the chances of your speculation, or the penalty of your presumption. There are, indeed, some things you may preach without presumption; only, do not expect to be paid for your sermons; for people will pay richly for being pleased—scarcely,[1] if at all, for being rebuked.

[1] [The MS. has "scurvily," which may be the right reading.]



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VI

# NOTES

ON SOME OF

# THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF THE

# ROYAL ACADEMY: 1875.

BY

JOHN RUSKIN,

SLADE PROFESSOR OF FINE ART, AND HON. STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

GEORGE ALLEN, SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT,

AND

ELLIS & WHITE, NEW BOND STREET.

1875.

*Price One Shilling.*

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[*Bibliographical Note.*—Of the *Notes* of 1875 there were four editions :—

*First Edition* (1875).—The title-page was as shown on the preceding page. An octavo pamphlet of 60 pages. On the reverse of the title-page is the imprint—"Watson & Hazell, Printers, London and Aylesbury"; preface (here pp. 261–262), pp. 3–4; text, pp. 5–58. The imprint is repeated at the foot of p. 58. On p. 59 is a "Note to Picture 518," added as an afterthought; p. 60 is blank. No headlines, the pages being numbered centrally. At the end are two pages of advertisements ("May 1875") of "Works by Mr. Ruskin, lately published or nearly ready." Issued at the end of May, sewn and without wrappers, but with a narrow slip of dark cloth pasted down the back.

*Second Edition* (1875).—A verbatim reprint of the First, except that the words "Second Edition" are added on the title-page, and the advertisements are dated "June 1875."

*Third Edition* (1875).—A reprint of the former editions, except that the words "Third Edition" were added to the title-page, and an Index of two pages was added between the Preface and the Text, thus extending the pamphlet to 61 pages, and altering the pagination from p. 5 onwards. This fact was, however, forgotten by the compiler of the index, which was made from the previous editions; the references to pages are, accordingly, erroneous (the number of the page given being two short throughout). The index was in four columns—giving respectively the Number in the Academy Catalogue, the Artist, the Title of the picture, and the Page of Ruskin's pamphlet. It is not here reprinted, as it was not drawn up by Ruskin and would no longer be useful: see the General List of Artists mentioned in *Academy Notes*, below, pp. 311–323.

*Fourth Edition* (1875).—An exact reprint of the Third, except for the alteration "Fourth" Edition on the title-page, and that the advertisements were dated "July 1875." Some copies of it were furnished with a plain and unprinted wrapper of coloured glazed paper, backed with cloth.

*Reprinted* (1902) in *Ruskin on Pictures*, vol. ii. pp. 219–264.

At this time Ruskin's publications were not sent out to the press, and no reviews of the pamphlet appeared.

There are no various readings to record, except that here "S." Tinworth has been corrected to "G.," and the "Note to Picture 518" is printed below the notice of the picture (p. 260).]

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# PREFACE

It is now just twenty years since I wrote the first number of these *Notes*, and fifteen since they were discontinued. I have no intention of renewing the series, unless occasionally, should accident detain me in London during the spring. But this year, for many reasons, it seemed to me imperatively proper to say as much as is here said.

And that the temper of the saying may not, so far as I can prevent it, be mistaken, I will venture to ask my reader to hear, and trust that he will believe, thus much concerning myself. Among various minor, but collectively sufficient, reasons for the cessation of these *Notes*, one of the chief was the exclamation of a young artist, moving in good society,—authentically, I doubt not, reported to me, —"D—— the fellow! why doesn't he back his friends?" The general want in the English mind of any abstract conception of justice, and the substitution for it of the idea of fidelity to a party, as the first virtue of public action, had never struck me so vividly before; and thenceforward it seemed to me useless, so far as artists were concerned, to continue criticism which they would esteem dishonourable unless it was false.

But Fortune has so sternly reversed her wheel during these recent years, that I am more likely now to be accused of malice than of equity; and I am therefore at the pains to beg the honest reader to believe that, having perhaps as much pleasure as other people both in backing my friends and fronting my enemies, I have never used, and shall never use, my power of criticism to such end; but that I write now, and have always written, so far as I am



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able, what may show that there is a fixed criterion of separation between right art and wrong; that no opinion, no time, and no circumstances can ever in one jot change this relation of their Good and Evil; and that it would be pleasant for the British public to recognize the one, and wise in them to eschew the other.

HERNE HILL, *May 23rd*, 1875.

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# NOTES, ETC.

BEFORE looking at any single picture, let us understand the scope and character of the Exhibition as a whole. The Royal Academy of England, in its annual publication, is now nothing more than a large coloured *Illustrated Times* folded in saloons,—the splendidest May number of the *Graphic*, shall we call it? That is to say, it is a certain quantity of pleasant, but imperfect, "illustration" of passing events, mixed with as much gossip of the past, and tattle of the future, as may be probably agreeable to a populace supremely ignorant of the one, and reckless of the other.

Supremely ignorant, I say;—ignorant, that is, on the lofty ground of their supremacy in useless knowledge.

For instance: the actual facts which Shakespeare knew about Rome were, in number and accuracy, compared to those which M. Alma-Tadema knows, as the pictures of a child's first story-book compared to Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*.[1]

But when Shakespeare wrote—

> "The noble sister of Publicola,
> The Moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle
> That's curdled[2] by the frost from purest snow,
> And hangs on Dian's temple"—

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[1] [M. Chesneau, in his *English School of Painting*, says: "Alma-Tadema endeavours with untiring patience to represent his figures as they really were in life, and to place them amid surroundings which really belong to them. His whole work is, indeed, an accurate illustration of Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*, and ought to delight the minds of archæologists" (p. 263). For Ruskin's further notice of Alma-Tadema, see below, p. 271.]

[2] [*Coriolanus*, v. 3. Ruskin quoted from memory. The word is not "curdled," but "curded," or "curdied" in the folio.]



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he knew Rome herself, to the heart; and M. Tadema, after reading his Smith's *Dictionary* through from A to *Z*, knows nothing of her but her shadow; and that, cast at sunset.

Yet observe, in saying that Academy work is now nothing more, virtually, than cheap coloured woodcut, I do not mean to depreciate the talent employed in it. Our public press is supported by an ingenuity and skill in rapid art unrivalled at any period of history; nor have I ever been so humbled, or astonished, by the mightiest work of Tintoret, Turner, or Velasquez, as I was, one afternoon last year, in watching, in the Dudley Gallery, two ordinary workmen for a daily newspaper finishing their drawings on the blocks by gaslight, against time.[1]

Nay, not in skill only, but in pretty sentiment, our press illustration, in its higher ranks, far surpasses—or indeed, in that department finds no rivalship in—the schools of classical art; and it happens curiously that the only drawing of which the memory remains with me as a possession, out of the Old Water-Colour Exhibition of this year—Mrs. Allingham's "Young Customers"[2]—should be, not only by an accomplished designer of woodcut, but itself the illustration of a popular story. The drawing, with whatever temporary purpose executed, is for ever lovely; a thing which I believe Gainsborough would have given one of his own pictures for, —old-fashioned as red-tipped daisies are—and more precious than rubies.[3]

And I am conscious of, and deeply regret, the inevitable warp which my own lately exclusive training under the elder schools gives to my estimate of this current art of the day;

[1] [Compare the paper on *The Black Arts*, below, pp. 357–363.]

[2] [Mrs. William Allingham (Helen Paterson), *b.* 1848, became an Associate of the Old Water-Colour Society in 1875 (the year following her marriage to the Irish poet, William Allingham), and has since been a constant exhibitor. In *The Art of England* (1884), Ruskin placed her name with that of Miss Kate Greenaway at the head of his lecture on "Fairy Land," and specified as her true gift the representation of "the gesture, character, and humour of charming children in country landscapes." Compare also *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, p. 409 of this volume. The drawing of "Young Customers" was painted from a black-and-white drawing on the wood in illustration of Mrs. Ewing's story, "A Flat Iron for a Farthing," in *Aunt Judy's Magazine*.]

[3] [Proverbs iii. 15.]

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and submissively bear the blame due to my sullen refusal of what good is offered me in the railroad station, because I cannot find in it what I found in the Ducal Palace. And I may be permitted to say this much, in the outset, in apology for myself, that I determined on writing this number of *Academy Notes* simply because I was so much delighted with Mr. Leslie's School, Mr. Leighton's Little Fatima, Mr. Hook's Hearts of Oak, and Mr. Couldery's Kittens,[1] that I thought I should be able to write an entirely good-humoured, and therefore, in all likelihood, practically useful, sketch of the socially pleasant qualities of modern English painting, which were not enough acknowledged in my former essays.

As I set myself to the work, and examined more important pictures, my humour changed, though much against my will. Not more reluctantly the son of Beor found his utterances become benedictory,[2] than I mine—the reverse. But the need of speaking, if not the service (for too often we can help least where need is most), is assuredly greater than if I could have spoken smooth things without ruffling anywhere the calm of praise.

Popular or classic, temporary or eternal, all good art is more or less didactic. My artist adversaries rage at me for saying so;[3] but the gayest of them cannot help being momentarily grave, nor the emptiest-headed occasionally instructive: and whatever work any of them do that is indeed honourable to themselves, is also intellectually helpful, no less than entertaining, to others. And it will be the surest way of estimating the intrinsic value of the art of this year, if we proceed to examine it in the several provinces which its didactic functions occupy; and collect the sum of its teaching on the subjects—which will, I think, sufficiently embrace its efforts in every kind—of Theology, History, Biography, Natural History, Landscape, and as the end of all, Policy.

[1] [See below, pp. 289, 291, 281, 295.]
[2] [Numbers xxii.–xxiv.]
[3] [Compare *The Laws of Fésole*, ch. ix. § 1.]

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## THEOLOGY

584. DEDICATED TO ALL THE CHURCHES.[1] (*G. F. Watts, R.A.*)

Here, at least, is one picture meant to teach; nor failing of its purpose, if we read it rightly. Very beautiful it might have been—and is, in no mean measure; but as years pass by, the artist concedes to himself, more and more, the privilege which none but the feeble should seek, of substituting the sublimity of mystery for that of absolute majesty of form. The relation between this grey and soft cloud of visionary power, and the perfectly substantial, bright, and near presence of the saints, angels, or Deities of early Christian art, involves questions of too subtle interest to be followed here; but in the essential force of it, belongs to the inevitable expression, in each period, of the character of its own faith. The Christ of the thirteenth century was vividly present to its thoughts, and dominant over its acts, as a God manifest in the flesh, well pleased in the people to whom He came; while ours is either forgotten, or seen, by those who yet trust in Him, only as a mourning and departing Ghost.

129. EZEKIEL'S VISION.[2] (*P. F. Poole, R.A.*)

Though this design cannot for a moment be compared with the one just noticed, in depth of feeling, there is yet, as there has been always in Mr. Poole's work, some acknowledgment of a supernatural influence in physical phenomena, which gives a nobler character to his storm-painting than can belong to any merely literal study of the elements. But the piece is chiefly interesting for its parallelism with that "Dedicated to all the Churches," in effacing the fearless

[1] [This picture, under its other title "The Spirit of Christianity," is among those presented by Watts to the nation. It now hangs in the Tate Gallery, No. 1637.]

[2] [This picture was selected for the nation from a bequest made by the artist, who died in 1879. It now hangs in the Tate Gallery, No. 1091.]

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realities of the elder creed among the confused speculations of our modern one. The beasts in Raphael's vision of Ezekiel[1] are as solid as the cattle in Smithfield; while here, if traceable at all in the drift of the storm-cloud (which, it is implied, was all that the prophet really saw), their animal character can only be accepted in polite compliance with the prophetic impression, as the weasel by Polonius. And my most Polonian courtesy fails in deciphering the second of the four—not-living—creatures.

218. RACHEL AND HER FLOCK. (*F. Goodall, R.A.*)

This is one of the pictures which, with such others as Holman Hunt's "Scapegoat," Millais's "Dove Returning to the Ark," etc.,[2] the public owe primarily to the leading genius of Dante Rossetti, the founder, and for some years the vital force, of the Pre-Raphaelite school. He was the first assertor in painting, as I believe I was myself in art literature (Goldsmith and Molière having given the first general statements of it),[3] of the great distinctive principle of that school—that things should be painted as they probably did look and happen, and not as, by rules of art developed under Raphael, Correggio, and Michael Angelo, they might be supposed gracefully, deliciously, or sublimely to have happened.

The adoption of this principle by good and great men produces the grandest art possible in the world; the adoption of it by vile and foolish men, very vile and foolish art; yet not so entirely nugatory as imitations of Raphael or Correggio would be by persons of the same calibre. An intermediate and large class of pictures have been produced by painters of average powers; mostly of considerable value,

[1] [In the Pitti Gallery, Florence.]

[2] [For the "Scapegoat," see above, p. 61; for the "Dove," p. 165.]

[3] [Compare *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 21: "It (the Pre-Raphaelite school) was headed, in literary power, by Wordsworth; but the first pure example of its mind and manner of art, as opposed to the erudite and *artificial* schools, will be found, so far as I know, in Molière's song, 'J'aime mieux ma mie.'" See also *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 375). For other references to Goldsmith, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 45), and *Val d'Arno*, § 208.]

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but which fall again into two classes, according to the belief of the artists in the truth, and understanding of the dignity of the subjects they endeavour to illustrate, or their opposite degree of incredulity, and materialistic vulgarism of interpretation.

The picture before us belongs to the higher class, but is not a fine example of it. We cannot tell from it whether Mr. Goodall believes Rachel to have wept over Ramah[1] from her throne in heaven; but at least we gather from it some suggestion of what she must have looked like when she was no more than a Syrian shepherdess.

That she was a very beautiful shepherdess, so that her lover thought years of waiting but as days, for the love he bore to her, Mr. Goodall has scarcely succeeded in representing. And on the whole he would have measured his powers more reasonably in contenting himself with painting a Yorkshire shepherdess instead of a Syrian one.* Like everybody except myself, he has been in the East. If that is the appearance of the new moon in the East, I am well enough content to guide, and gild, the lunacies of my declining years by the light of the old Western one.

518. JULIAN THE APOSTATE PRESIDING AT A CONFERENCE OF SECTARIANS. (Gibbon, ch. xxiii.) (*E. Armitage, R.A.*[2])

This, I presume, is a modern enlightened improvement on the Disputa del Sacramento.[3] The English Church is to be congratulated on the education she gives her artists.

* Compare, however, at once 582 ["A Seller of Doves"], which is, on the whole, the most honourably complete and scholastic life-size figure in the rooms, with well cast, and unaffectedly well painted, drapery.

[1] [Jeremiah xxxi. 15; and for the following reference, see Genesis xxix. 20.]

[2] [Edward Armitage (1817–1896) is represented in the Tate Gallery by "The Remorse of Judas," painted in 1866, and presented by him to the nation. He was a pupil of Paul Delaroche (see below, p. 488). Wall-paintings by him may be seen in the Palace of Westminster, the parish church of Marylebone, and the church of St. John, Islington.]

[3] [For this work by Raphael in the Vatican, as the "type of the Italian school," see *Elements of Drawing*, § 195, and *Two Paths*, § 21; and compare *A Joy for Ever*, § 147; *Mornings in Florence*, § 75 *n.*; and *Præterita*, ii. § 34.]

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Fumbling with sham Gothic, penny tracts, and twopenny Scripture prints, among the embers of reverence and sacred life that yet linger on from the soul of ancient days, she holds her own, in outward appearance at least, among our simple country villages; and in our more ignorant manufacturing centres, contentedly enamels the service of Mammon with the praise of God. But in the capital of England—here, on her Vatican hill above St. Peter's church, and beside St. Paul's—*this* is the testimony she wins from art, as compared with the councils of Fathers and concourses of Saints which poor dark-minded Italy once loved to paint. Mr. Armitage, however, has not completed his satire with subtlety; he knows the higher virtue of sectarians as little as Gibbon knew those of Julian,* whose sincere apostasy was not the act of a soul which could "enjoy the agreeable spectacle"[1] of vile dispute among any men—least of all, among those whom he had once believed messengers of Christ.

* "The rarity and grandeur of his character being that he was a Greek in ideas and a Roman in action; who really did, and abstained, strictly to ideal, in a time when everybody else was sadly fallen from his ideal.

"In 353 he is made Cæsar (Constantius having no sons, and he being last of his race); and from that to Constantius' death in 361 he has to fight the Franks and Alemanni. During the last few years of this time I find he lived mostly at Paris—that he fortified the ancient Lutetia (l'Ile de la Cité), built the Thermæ Juliani, the remains of which (Thermes de Julien) are still visible in the Rue de la Harpe, between Palais de Clugny and Ecole de Médecine. Also, in a scarcity of corn from inroads of the Germans, he got a great supply of corn from England (calculated at 120,000 quarters *at once*), and fed people all along the Rhine from Bingen to Cologne. He says (Epist. ii.) he was a Christian up to his twentieth year, 351; and he said nothing about his change (in public) till 361. Then he felt himself the successor of M. Aurelius, and seems to have gone to work in his determined, clear-sighted way. But the pagans seem to have been surprised at his faith as much as the Christians at his apostasy."—Rev. R. St. J. Tyrwhitt.[2]

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[1] [The reference is to Gibbon, ch. xxiii.: "Julian, who understood and derided their theological disputes, invited to the palace the leaders of the hostile sects, that he might enjoy the agreeable spectacle of their furious encounters." The calculated cynicism of Gibbon was profoundly unsympathetic to Ruskin: see the sweeping criticism in his contribution (reprinted in a later volume of this edition) to the discussion on "The Best Hundred Books" (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 1886). See also *The Bible of Amiens, passim.*]

[2] [This note was printed at the end in the original editions of the pamphlet (see Bibliographical Note, p. 260).]

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1293–1295. TERRA-COTTAS, REPRESENTING SCENES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST. (*G. Tinworth.*[1])

Full of fire and zealous faculty, breaking its way through all conventionalism to such truth as it can conceive; able also to conceive far more than can be rightly expressed on this scale. And, after all the labours of past art on the Life of Christ, here is an English workman fastening, with more decision than I recollect in any of them, on the gist of the sin of the Jews, and their rulers, in the choice of Barabbas, and making the physical fact of contrast between the man released and the man condemned clearly visible. We must receive it, I suppose, as a flash of really prophetic intelligence on the question of Universal Suffrage.

These bas-reliefs are the most earnest work in the Academy, next to Mr. Boehm's study of Carlyle.[2] But how it happens that, after millions of money have been spent in the machinery of art education at Kensington, an ornamental designer of so high faculty as this one should never in his life have found a human being able to explain to him the first principles of relief, or show him the difference between decorative foliage-sculpture and Norman hatchet-work, I must leave the Kensington authorities to explain, for it passes all my capacities of conjecture, and all my hitherto experience of the costly and colossal public institution of—Nothing—out of which, to wise men, as here, can come nothing; but to fools everywhere—worse than nothing. Kensington has flattened its thousands of weak students

[1] [Mr. George Tinworth (b. 1843), modeller to the Doultons, Lambeth Pottery, whose service he entered in 1866; officer of the French Academy, 1878; studied at the Academy while earning his living as a working wheelwright in Walworth. "Mr. Tinworth recalls with much satisfaction one morning when he was called into the office of Messrs. Doulton, of Lambeth, who had given him a position in their studios to enable him to develop his genius for plastic art. 'Well, Mr. Tinworth,' said Sir Henry Doulton, 'what do you think of Mr. Ruskin as an art critic?' 'That all depends upon what Mr. Ruskin thinks of my work,' was the answer. Mr. Tinworth was then shown Ruskin's critique on his latest exhibits, and—he thought well of the critic's judgment" (*Westminster Gazette*, November 5, 1903). Mr. Tinworth's work may be seen in the Guard's Chapel (twenty-eight panels).]

[2] [See below, p. 288.]

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into machine pattern-papers: here, it had a true man to deal with; and, for all he has learned of his business, he might as well have lived in South Australia.

## HISTORY

### 26. The Sculpture Gallery. (*L. Alma-Tadema.*[1])

This, I suppose, we must assume to be the principal historical piece of the year; a work showing artistic skill and classic learning, both in high degree. But both parallel in their method of selection. The artistic skill has succeeded with all its objects in the degree of their unimportance. The piece of silver plate is painted best; the griffin bas-relief it stands on, second best; the statue of the empress worse than the griffins, and the living personages worse than the statue. I do not know what feathers the fan with the frightful mask in the handle, held by the nearest lady, is supposed to be made of; to a simple spectator they look like peacock's, without the eyes.[2] And, indeed, the feathers, under which the motto "I serve" of French art seems to be written in these days, are, I think, very literally, all feather and no eyes—the raven's feather, to wit, of Sycorax.[3] The selection of the subject is similarly—one might say, filamentous—of the extremity, instead of the centre. The old

[1] [In the *Art of England*, § 61, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema is named by Ruskin as representatively "classic," as "a careful and learned interpreter of certain phases of Greek and Roman life, and as himself a most accomplished painter, on long-established principles." In the same lecture (§ 77) Ruskin mentions Alma-Tadema as "differing from all the artists I have ever known, except John Lewis, in the gradual increase of technical accuracy, which attends and enhances together the expanding range of his dramatic invention." Tadema was elected A.R.A. in 1876, and R.A. in 1879.]

[2] [Compare the letter in *Hortus Inclusus*, cited in a note in *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 288).]

[3] [*The Tempest*, i. 2:—

> *Caliban.* As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed
> With raven's feather from unwholesome fen
> Drop on you both! . . .
> This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother.

The passage is quoted and commented upon in *Munera Pulveris*, § 134.]

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French Republicans, reading of Rome, chose such events to illustrate her history, as the battle of Romulus with the Sabines, the vow of the Horatii, or the self-martyrdom of Lucretia. The modern Republican sees in the Rome he studies so profoundly, only a central establishment for the manufacture and sale of imitation-Greek articles of virtu.

The execution is dexterous, but more with mechanical steadiness of practice than innate fineness of nerve. It is impossible, however, to say how much the personal nervous faculty of an artist of this calibre is paralyzed by his education in schools which I could not characterize in my Oxford inaugural lectures otherwise than as the "schools of clay,"[1] in which he is never shown what Venetians or Florentines meant by "painting," and allowed to draw his flesh steadily and systematically with shadows of charcoal and lights of cream-soap, without ever considering whether there would be any reflections in the one, or any flush of life in the other. The head on the extreme left is exceptionally good; but who ever saw a woman's neck and hand blue-black under reflection from white drapery, as they are in the nearer figure? It is well worth while to go straight from this picture to the two small studies by Mr. Albert Moore,[2] 356 and 357,[3] which are consummately artistic and scientific work. Examine them closely and with patience; the sofa and basket especially, in 357, with a lens of moderate power; and, by way of a lesson in composition, hide in this picture the little honeysuckle ornament above the head, and the riband hanging over the basket, and see what becomes of everything! Or try the effect of concealing the yellow flower in the hair, in the "Flower Walk." And for comparison with the elementary method of M. Tadema, look at the blue reflection on the chin in this figure; at the reflection of the warm brick wall on its right arm;

[1] [See *Lectures on Art*, chs. v. and vii. §§ 139, 173, 185, etc.]

[2] [Albert Moore (1841–1893), brother of Henry Moore. There is a characteristic example of his work in the Tate Gallery (No. 1549, "Blossoms").]

[3] [356. "A Flower Walk." 357. "Pansies."]

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and at the general modes of unaffected relief by which the extended left arm in "Pansies" detaches itself from the background. And you ought afterwards, if you have an eye for colour, never more to mistake a tinted drawing for a painting.

238. THE FESTIVAL. (*E. J. Poynter, A.*[1])

I wonder how long Mr. Poynter thinks a young lady could stand barefoot on a round-runged ladder; or that a sensible Greek girl would take her sandals off to try, on an occasion when she had festive arrangements to make with care. The ladders themselves, here and in No. 236 ("The Golden Age"), appear to me not so classical, or so rude, in type, as might have been expected, but to savour somewhat of expeditious gas-lighting. Of course Mr. Poynter's object in No. 236 is to show us, like Michael Angelo, the adaptability of limbs to awkward positions.[2] But he can only, by this anatomical science, interest his surgical spectators; while "The Golden Age," in this pinchbeck one, interests nobody. Not even the painter,—for had he looked at the best authorities for account of it, he would have found that its people lived chiefly on corn and strawberries, both growing wild; and doubtless the loaded fruit-branches drooped to their reach. Both these pictures are merely studies of decorative composition, and have far too much pains taken with them for their purpose. Decorative work, however complete, should be easy.

401. READY! (*P. Cockerell.*)

I suppose this is meant for portrait, not history. At all events, the painter has been misled in his endeavour, if he made any, to render Swiss character, by Schiller's absurd

[1] [Sir Edward Poynter (*b.* 1836) who had been elected A.R.A. in 1868, was elected R.A. in 1876; President in 1896, in succession to Millais.]

[2] [In his *Lectures on Art* (1879) Sir Edward Poynter replied to Mr. Ruskin's criticisms on Michael Angelo: see especially Lecture ix.]



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lines. Schiller, of all men high in poetic fame whose works are in any wise known to me, has the feeblest hold of facts, and the dullest imagination. "Still as a lamb!"[1] Sucking, I suppose?—they are so very quiet in that special occupation; and never think of such a thing as jumping, when they have had enough, of course? And I should like to hear a Swiss (or English) boy, with any stuff in him, liken himself to a lamb! If there were any real event from which the legend sprung, the boy's saying would have been not in the smallest degree pathetic: "Never fear *me*, father; I'll stand like grandmother's donkey when she wants him to go,"—or something to such effect.

482. THE BABYLONIAN MARRIAGE MARKET. (*E. Long.*[2])

A painting of great merit, and well deserving purchase by the Anthropological Society. For the varieties of character in the heads are rendered with extreme subtlety; while, as a mere piece of painting, the work is remarkable, in the modern school, for its absence of affectation: there is no insolently indulged indolence nor vulgarly asserted dexterity,—the painting is good throughout, and unobtrusively powerful.

It becomes a question of extreme interest with me, as I examine this remarkable picture, how far the intensely subtle observation of physical character and expression which rendered the painting of it possible, necessitates the isolation of the artist's thoughts from subjects of intellectual interest or moral beauty. Certainly the best expressional works of the higher schools present nothing analogous to the anatomical precision with which the painter has here gradated the feature and expression of the twelve waiting girls, from great physical beauty to absolute ugliness, and from the

[1] ["Walther Tell . . . ich will nicht gebunden seyn. Ich will still halten wie ein Lamm."—Act iii. sc. 3.]

[2] [Edwin Longsden Long (1829–1891) was elected A.R.A. in the year following the exhibition of this picture (now in the collection at Holloway College). He was elected R.A. in 1881. In addition to his pictures of biblical and archæological interest he painted some portraits; one of Sir Stafford Northcote is in the National Portrait Gallery.]

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serene insolence and power of accomplished fleshly womanhood to the restless audacity and crushed resignation of its despised states of personal inferiority, unconsoled by moral strength or family affection. As a piece of anthropology, it is the natural and very wonderful product of a century occupied in carnal and mechanical science. In the total paralysis of conception—without attempt to disguise the palsy—as to the existence of any higher element in a woman's mind than vanity and spite, or in a man's than avarice and animal passion, it is also a specific piece of the natural history of our own century; but only a partial one, either of it, or of the Assyrian, who was once as "the cedars in the garden of God."[1]

The painter has in the first instance misread his story or been misled by his translation.[2] This custom, called wise by Herodotus, is so called only as practised in country districts with respect to the fortuneless girls of the lower labouring population; daughters of an Assyrian noble, however plain-featured, would certainly not be exposed in the market to receive dowry from the dispute for their fairer sisters.* But there is matter of deeper interest in the

* The passage in Strabo[3] which gives some countenance to the idea of universality in the practice, gives a somewhat different colour to it by the statement that over each of the three great Assyrian provinces a "temperately wise" person was set to conduct the ordinances of marriage.

[1] [Ezek. xxxi. 3, 8: "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon. . . . The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him."]

[2] ["Herodotus records one of their customs, which, whether in jest or earnest, he declares to be the wisest he ever heard of. This was their wife-auction, by which they managed to find husbands for all their young women. The greatest beauty was put up first, and knocked down to the highest bidder; then the next in the order of comeliness—and so on to the damsel who was equidistant between beauty and plainness, who was given away gratis. Then the least plain was put up, and knocked down to the gallant who would marry her for the smallest consideration—and so on till the plainest was got rid of to some cynical worthy, who placidly preferred lucre to looks. By transferring to the scale of the ill-favoured the prices paid for the fair, beauty was made to endow ugliness, and the rich man's taste was the poor man's gain."—Swayne's *Herodotus*. The reference is to Herodotus, book i. 196. For another reference to it, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 263).]

[3] [Book xvi. ch. i. § 20: "Three discreet persons, chiefs of each tribe, are appointed, who present publicly young women who are marriageable, and give notice by the crier, beginning with those most in estimation, of a sale of them to men intending to become husbands. In this manner marriages are contracted."]

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custom, as it is compared to our modern life. However little the English educated classes now read their Bibles, they cannot but, in the present state of literary science, be aware that there is a book, once asserted to have been written by St. John, in which a spiritual Babylon is described as the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, and her ruin represented as lamentable, especially to the *merchants* who trafficked with her in many beautiful and desirable articles, but above all in "souls of men."[1]

Also, the educated reader cannot but be aware that the animosity of Christian sects—which we have seen the subject of another important national-historical picture in this Academy[2]—has for the last three hundred years wasted much of their energy in endeavours to find Scriptural reason for calling each other Babylonians, and whatever else that term may be understood to imply.

There is, however, no authority to be found in honestly read Scripture for these well-meaning, but ignorant, incivilities. Read in their entirety, the books of the Bible represent to us a literal and material deliverance of a visibly separated people from a literal bondage; their establishment in a literally fruitful and peaceful land; and their being led away out of that land, in consequence of their refusal to obey the laws of its Lord, into a literal captivity in a small material Babylon. The same Scriptures represent to us a spiritual deliverance of an invisibly separated people from spiritual bondage; their establishment in the spiritual land of Christian joy and peace; and their being led away out of this land into a spiritual captivity in a great spiritual Babylon, the mother of abominations, and in all active transactions especially delightful to "merchants"—persons engaged, that is to say, in obtaining profits by exchange instead of labour.

[1] [Revelation xvii. 5, xviii. 11–13. "Once asserted," etc., but much doubted, even in very early times, and the book is now generally admitted to be a compilation of a Jewish apocalypse (written about 68 A.D.) with later Christian interpolations and additions (about 140 A.D.).]

[2] [See above, pp. 267, 269.]

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And whatever was literally done, whether apparently wise or not, in the minor fleshly Babylon, will therefore be found spiritually fulfilled in the major ghostly one; and, for instance, as the most beautiful and marvellous maidens were announced for literal sale by auction in Assyria, are not also the souls of our most beautiful and marvellous maidens announced annually for sale by auction in Paris and London, in a spiritual manner, for the spiritual advantages of position in society?

## BIOGRAPHY

Under this head I include Drama, Domestic Incident, and Portrait—this last being, if good, the sum of what drama and domestic chances have been wrought by, and befallen to, the person portrayed.

Not to begin with too high matters, and collapse subsequently, suppose we first contemplate the pretty little scene,

408. Domestic Troubles. (*J. Burr.*)

The boy peeping in fearfully at the door has evidently, under the inspiration of modern scientific zeal, dissected the bellows; and whether they will ever help the pot to boil again is doubtful to grandpapa. The figure of the younger child, mute with awe and anxiety, yet not wholly guiltless of his naughty brother's curiosity, is very delightful. Avenging Fate, at the chimney-piece, is too severe.

I have marked, close by it, two other pictures, 403, 405, which interested me for reasons scarcely worth printing.[1] The cloister of Assisi has been carefully and literally studied, in all but what is singular or beautiful in it—namely, the flattened dome over its cistern, and the central mossy well

[1] [403. "The Convent of San Francesco during the Sacking of the City of Assisi by the Perugians, 1442" (F. W. W. Topham). 405. "On the Ponte della Paglia, Going to the Council" (H. Wallis).]

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above. But there is more conscientious treatment of the rest of the building, and greater quietness of natural light, than in most picture backgrounds of these days. "Ponte della Paglia," 405,[1] may be useful to travellers in at least clearly, if not quite accurately, showing the decorative use of the angle sculpture of the drunkenness of Noah on the Ducal Palace;[2] and the Bridge of Sighs is better painted than usual.

242. A MERRIE JEST. (*H. S. Marks, A.*[3])

Very characteristic of the painter's special gift. The difficulty of so subtle a rendering as this of the half-checked yet extreme mirth of persons naturally humorous, can only be judged of by considering how often aspects of laughter are attempted in pictures, and how rarely we feel ourselves inclined to join in the merriment. The piece of accessory landscape is very unaffected and good, and the painting throughout, here, as well as in the equally humorous, and useless, picture of bygone days, 166,[4] of good standard modern quality.

107. THE BARBER'S PRODIGY. (*J. B. Burgess.*[5])

A close and careful study of modern domestic drama, deserving notice, however, chiefly for its unaffected manner of work and moderately pleasant incident, as opposed to over-laboured pictures of what is merely ugly or meanly faultful;

[1] [By H. Wallis.]

[2] [See *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. pp. 357-358, and Plate I.).]

[3] [H. Stacy Marks (1829–1898), who became R.A. in 1878, was for many years on friendly terms with Ruskin—a friendship of which a pleasant memorial (with several letters from Ruskin) is given in the painter's *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, ii. ch. xxiii. See also Vol. XIII. p. xxxviii., and the Introduction in this volume, p. xxviii. In his lectures on the *Art of England* (§ 74), Ruskin expressed his "admiration of the kind of portraiture which, without supporting its claim to public attention by the celebrity of its subjects, renders the pictures of Mr. Stacy Marks so valuable as epitomes and types of English life," and added that "many an old traveller's remembrances were quite pathetically touched by his monumental record of the 'Three Jolly Post-boys.'" Several drawings of birds by Marks are in the collection of the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford.]

[4] ["The Jolly Postboys": see preceding note.]

[5] [John Bagnold Burgess (1830–1897), elected A.R.A. in 1877, and R.A. in 1888.].

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141, 241—wastes of attention, skill, and time.[1] "Too Good to be True," 153, another clever bit of minor drama, is yet scarcely good enough to be paused at; "Private and Confidential," 375, deserves a few moments more. 879 ["The Beer Fish"] (A. Lüben) is much surer and finer in touch than anything English that I can find in this sort. The Düsseldorf Germans and the Neuchâtel Swiss have been doing splendid domestic work lately; but, I suppose, are too proud to exhibit here.[2]

75. SOPHIA WESTERN. (*W. P. Frith, R.A.*)

The painter seems not to have understood, nor are the public likely to understand, that Fielding means, in the passage quoted,[3] to say that Miss Western's hands were white, soft, translucent, and at the moment snow-cold. In the picture they cannot be shown to be cold—are certainly not white; do not look soft; and scarcely show the light of the fire on them, much less through them. But what is the use of painting from Fielding at all? Of all our classic authors, it is he who demands the reader's attention most strictly;[4] and what modern reader ever attends to anything?

88. LOOT: 1797. (*A. C. Gow.*[5])

An entirely fine picture of its class, representing an ordinary fact of war as it must occur, without any forced sentiment or vulgar accent. Highly skilful throughout, keenly seen, well painted, and deserving a better place than the slow cart-horses and solid waterfalls on the line have left for it.

[1] [141. "A Barber's Shop in Tunis" (J. E. Hodgson, A.). 241. "A Cock Fight" (J. E. Hodgson, A.). 153. (W. Orchardson, A.) 375. (J. Clark.)]

[2] [For the Düsseldorf school, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 20, and *Eagle's Nest*, § 88.]

[3] ["The lady in the rich habit said, 'If you will give me leave, madam, I will warm myself a few minutes at your kitchen fire, for it is really very cold.' . . . She then pulled off her gloves, and displayed to the fire two hands which had every property of snow in them, except that of melting."—*Tom Jones*, bk. x. ch. iii.]

[4] [For Ruskin's appreciation of Fielding, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 34, 51, and 82.]

[5] [Andrew Carrick Gow (*b.* 1848) became A.R.A. in 1881, and R.A. in 1891. There are several pictures by him in the Tate Gallery.]

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89. War Time. (*B. Riviere.*[1])

Compare 626 at once ["The Last of the Garrison"]: the first is a true piece of feeling—almost Wordsworthian; the second, disgraceful to it, both in the low pitch of its vulgar horror and in its loss of power, by retreat to picturesque tradition, instead of dealing, like the other, with the facts of our own day.

If Mr. Riviere really feels as I think he feels, and means to do good, he must not hope to do anything with people who would endure the sight of a subject such as this. He may judge what they are worth by a sentence I heard as I stood before it. "Last of the garrison—ha! they're all finished off, you see: isn't that well done?" At all events, if he means to touch them, he must paint the cooking of a French pet-poodle; not the stabbing of a bloodhound.

214. The Crown of Love.[2] (*J. E. Millais, R.A.*)

Much of the painter's old power remains in this sketch (it cannot be called a painting); and it is of course the

[1] [Briton Riviere (*b.* 1840) became A.R.A. in 1879, and R.A. in 1881. For Ruskin's appreciation of his principal picture of 1878 ("Sympathy"), see the letter of June 10, 1880, on "A Museum or Picture Gallery," reprinted in *On the Old Road*, 1885, vol. i. § 502, and in a later volume of this edition. A small version of "Sympathy" is in the Tate Gallery, where also other pictures by Mr. Riviere may be seen.]

[2] [In this picture a hero bears his lady-love up a steep slope. The subject was borrowed from George Meredith's poem:—

"Oh might I load my arms with thee,
Like that young lover of romance
Who loved and gained so gloriously
The fair Princess of France!

Because he dared to love so high,
He, bearing her dear weight, must speed
To where the mountain touched the sky:
So the proud King decreed.

Unhalting he must bear her on,
Nor pause a space to gather breath,
And on the height she would be won—
And she was won in death!"]

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leading one of the year in dramatic sentiment. This, then, it appears, is the best that English art can at the moment say in praise of the virtue and promise of the reward of Love; this, the subject of sentimental contemplation likely to be most pleasing to the present British public—torture, namely, carried to crisis of death in the soul of one creature and flesh of another. The British public are welcome to their feast; but, as purchasers, they ought to be warned that, compared with the earlier dual pictures of the school ("Huguenot," "Claudio and Isabella," "April Love," and the like[1]), this composition balances its excess of sentiment by defect of industry; and that it is not a precedent advantageous to them, in the arrangement of pictures of lovers, that one should have a body without a face, and the other a face without a body.

47. Hearts of Oak. (*J. C. Hook, R.A.*)

Beautiful, but incomplete; the painter wants more heart of oak himself. If he had let all his other canvases alone and finished this, the year's work would have been a treasure for all the centuries; while now it is only "the Hook of the season."

It looks right and harmonious in its subdued sunshine. But it isn't. Why should mussel-shells cast a shadow, but boats and hats none? Why should toy-carts and small stones have light and dark sides, and tall rocks none? I fancy all the pictures this year must have been painted in the sunless east wind; and only a bit of sunshine put in here and there out of the painter's head, where he thought it would do nobody any harm.

[1] [For Ruskin's references to Millais's "Huguenot," see Vol. V. p. 127; Vol. XI. p. 59; Vol. XII. p. 333. For Holman Hunt's "Claudio and Isabella," see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 49); *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 136, 138, (Vol. XII. pp. 160, 161); and *The Art of England*, § 6. For "April Love," by Arthur Hughes, see above, p. 68.]

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112. A NOVEMBER MORNING, ETC.[1] (*H. T. Wells, R.A.*[2])

Fishermen's hearts being of oak, what are huntsmen's hearts made of? They will have to ascertain, and prove, soon; there being question nowadays among the lower orders whether they have got any to speak of.[3]

A pleasant aristocratic picture—creditable to Mr. Wells, and the nobility. Not a Vandyck, neither.

430. SUNDAY AFTERNOON. (*R. Collinson.*)

This picture, though of no eminent power in any respect, is extremely delightful to myself; and ought, I think, to be so to most unsophisticated persons who care for English rural life; representing, as it does, a pleasant and virtuous phase of such life, whether on Sunday or Saturday afternoon.

Why, by the way, *must* we accept it for Sunday? Have our nice old women no rest on any other day? Do they never put on a clean muslin kerchief on any other day? Do they never read their Bible (of course, it would be improper to suppose any other book readable by them) on any other day? Whatever day it be, here, at all events, are peace, light, cleanliness, and content.

Luxury even, of a kind; the air coming in at that door must be delicious, and the leaves outside of it look like a bit of the kitchen-garden side of Paradise. They please me all the better, because, since scientific people were good

[1] [At Birdsall House, Yorkshire. Testimonial hunt-picture, containing portraits of Lord and Lady Middleton, the Hon. Digby and Hon. Mrs. Willoughby, the Hon. Ernest Willoughby, etc.]

[2] [Henry Tamworth Wells (1828–1903) practised portraiture exclusively as a miniature painter up to 1861, when his first portrait in oils was exhibited. A.R.A. 1866, R.A. 1870.]

[3] [For Ruskin on hunting, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 22; and in connexion therewith, a letter of January 15, 1870, on "The Morality of Field Sports," reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, ii. 184, and in a later volume of this edition; *Love's Meinie*, §§ 133, 137; *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 26; *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 37; and a letter on "The Lord's Prayer and the Church," reprinted in *On the Old Road*, 1899, iii. § 228, and in a later volume of this edition.]

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enough to tell us that leaves were made green by "green-leaf,"[1] I haven't seen a leaf painted green by anybody. But this peep through the door is like old times, when we were neither plagued with soot nor science.

Note, for a little piece of technical study in composition, that the painter would not have been able to venture on so pure colour outside of the door had he not painted the door green as well, only of a modified tint, and so led the subdued colour forward into the red interior, taken up again by the shadows of the plants in the window. The management of the luminous shadow throughout is singularly skilful—all the more so because it attracts so little attention. *This* is true chiaroscuro; not spread treacle or splashed mud, speckled with white spots—as a Rembrandt amateur thinks.

Mr. Pettie,[2] for instance, a man of real feeling and great dramatic power, is ruining himself by these shallow notions of chiaroscuro. If he had not been mimicking Rembrandt, as well as the "costume of the sixteenth century," in 318,[3] he never would have thought of representing Scott's entirely heroic and tender-hearted Harry of Perth (223), merely by the muscular back and legs of him (the legs, by the way, were slightly bandy[4]—if one holds to accuracy in anatomical respects); nor vulgarized the real pathos and most subtle expression of his Jacobites (1217) by the slovenly dark background,[5] corresponding virtually to the slouched hat of a theatrical conspirator. I have been examining the painting of the chief Jacobite's face very closely. It is nearly as good as a piece of old William Hunt; but Hunt never loaded his paint, except in sticks, and moss, and such like.

[1] [For another ironical reference to the scientific explanation that leaves are made green by "chlorophyll," see *Queen of the Air*, § 57, and *Proserpina*, ch. iii.]

[2] [John Pettie (1839–1893), A.R.A. 1867, R.A. 1873. A collection of his works was exhibited at the Academy in 1894. He is represented in the Tate Gallery by "The Vigil" (No. 1582).]

[3] [318. "Portrait in the Costume of the Sixteenth Century." 223. "Scene in Hal of the Wynd's Smithy." 1217. "Jacobites, 1745"; Mr. Pettie's Diploma picture.]

[4] [See *The Fair Maid of Perth*, ch. ii.: "His legs were slightly bent, but not in a manner which could be said to approach deformity."]

[5] [On the subject of backgrounds, see above, p. 117.]

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Now there's a wrinkle quite essential to the expression, under the Jacobite's eye, got by a projecting ridge of paint, instead of a proper dark line. Rembrandt's bad bricklayer's work, with all the mortar sticking out at the edges, may be pardonable in a Dutchman sure of his colours; but it is always licentious; and in these days, when the first object of manufacture is to produce articles that won't last, if the mortar cracks, where are we?

To return to the question of chiaroscuro. The present Academicians—most of whom I have had anxious talk of, with their fathers or friends, when they were promising boys—have since been, with the best part of their minds, amusing themselves in London drawing-rooms, or Eastern deserts, instead of learning their business; with the necessary result that they have, as a body, qualified themselves rather to be Masters of Ceremonies than of Studies, and guides rather of Caravans than Schools; and have not got an inkling of any principle of their art to bless themselves—or other people, with. So that they have not only filled their large railroad station and stalls (attached refreshment room completing the nature of the thing) with a mass of heterogeneous pictures, of which at least two-thirds are beneath the level of acceptance in any well established dealer's shop;* but they have encouraged, by favour of position, quite the worst abuses of the cheap art of the day—of which these tricks of rubbing half the canvas over with black or brown, that the rest may come out handsomer, or that the spectator may be properly, but at the same time economically, prepared for its melancholy or sublime tenor, are among the least creditable either to our English wits or honesty. The portrait, No. 437,[1] for instance, is a very respectable piece

* I permit myself to name, for instance, not as worse than others, but as peculiarly disagreeable to myself, because I love monks, herons, and sea—450, 291, and 837.[2]

[1] [437. "Dr. Perry, first Bishop of Melbourne." Painted by subscription for the colony of Victoria (H. Weigall).]

[2] [450. "Steady, Brother, Steady!" (W. D. Sadler). 291. "Sport in the Olden Time" (W. Hughes). 837. "Give Way" (Colin Hunter).]

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of painting, and would have taken its place well in the year's show of work, if the inkstand had not been as evanescent as the vision of Ezekiel, and the library shelves so lost in the gloom of art as to suggest symbolically, what our bishops at home seem so much afraid of—indistinctness in colonial divinity.[1] And the two highly moral pictures, 101 and 335,[2] which are meant to enforce on the public mind the touching theories that, for the labouring poor, grass is not green nor geese white, and that, on the pastoral poor, the snow falls dirty, might have delivered their solemn message just as convincingly from a more elevated stage of the wall-pulpit, without leaving on the minds of any profane spectator like myself the impression of their having been executed by a converted crossing-sweeper, with his broom, after it was worn stumpy.

If the reader is interested in the abstract qualities of art, he will find it useful at once to compare with these more or less feeble or parsimonious performances two pictures, which, if not high in attainment, are, at least, the one strong, and the other generous. 184. "Peasantry of Esthonia [West Russia] going to Market" (G. Bochmann) is masterly work, by a man practised in his business, but who has been taught it in a bad school. It is a true artistic abstraction of grey and angular natural facts; it indeed omits too much—for even in Esthonia there must be grass somewhere, or what could the horses eat?—and it omits the best things and keeps the worst: but it is done with method, skill, and a conscientious notion that to be grey and angular is to be right. And it deserves a place in an Academy exhibition.

[1] [Ruskin was warmly interested in the case of Bishop Colenso, who had been inhibited by the Bishop of Oxford from preaching in Carfax a few months before this pamphlet was written. See *Fors Clavigera*, 1875, Letter 49; 1876, 62; and *Letters to Ward*, ii. 58; and for other references to him, *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 35; *The Laws of Fésole*, ch. ix. § 8 (Vol. XV.); and a letter of September 18, 1865, reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, ii. 143, and in a later volume of this edition. In 1887 Ruskin presented a large crystal of diamond to the Natural History Museum "in honour of his friend, the loyal and patiently adamantine First Bishop of Natal."]

[2] [101. "The Bearers of the Burden" (G. H. Boughton, now R.A.). 335. "Hard Weather" J. H. E. Partington).]

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On the other hand, 268, "Getting Better" (C. Calthrop[1]), is an intensely laborious, honest, and intentionally difficult study of chiaroscuro in two lights, on varied colour; and in all other respects it is well meant, and generously, according to the painter's power, completed. I won't say more of it, because at the height it hangs I can see no more; nor must the reader suppose that what I *have* said implies anything beyond what is stated. All that I certify is, that as a study of chiaroscuro it deserves close attention, much praise, and a better place than it at present occupies.

366. The Mayor of Newcastle-on-Tyne. (*W. W. Ouless.*[2])

An agreeable and vigorous portrait, highly creditable to the painter, and honourable to its subject and its possessors. Mr. Ouless has adopted from Mr. Millais what was deserving of imitation, and used the skill he has learned to better ends. All his portraits here are vigorous and interesting.

221. John Stuart Blackie. (*J. Archer.*[3])

An entirely well-meant, and I should conjecture successful, portrait of a man much deserving portraiture.[4] The background has true meaning, and is satisfactorily complete; very notable, in that character, among the portrait backgrounds of the year. The whole is right and good.

718. The Countess of Pembroke. (*E. Clifford.*[5])

Mr. Clifford evidently means well, and is studying in the elder schools; and painting persons who will permit him to do his best in his own way.

There is much of interesting in his work, but he has

[1] [Claude Calthrop (1845–1893) had gained the gold medal at the Academy for historical work.]

[2] [Walter William Ouless (*b.* 1848), A.R.A. 1877, R.A. 1881].

[3] [James Archer (1822–1904), A.R.S.A. 1850, R.S.A. 1858, painter of historical and religious pictures; came to London in 1862, and afterwards devoted himself mainly to portraits.]

[4] [For Ruskin's acquaintance with Blackie in earlier years, see Vol. XII. p. xxxv.]

[5] [Edward Clifford (*b.* 1844), portrait-painter; also treasurer of the Church Army; visited Father Damien, 1888.]

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yet to pass through the Valley of Humiliation before he can reach the Celestial Mountains.[1] He must become perfectly simple before he can be sublime; above all, he must not hope to be great by effort. This portrait is overlaboured; and, towards the finishing, he has not well seen what he was doing, and has not rightly balanced his front light against that of the sky. But his drawings always deserve careful notice.

317. Miss Margaret Stuart Wortley. (*A. Stuart Wortley.*[2])

The rightest and most dignified female portrait here—as Lady Coleridge's drawing of Dr. Newman, 1069, is the most subtle among those of the members of learned professions (though Mr. Laurence's two beautiful drawings, 1054, 1062,[3] only fall short of it by exhibiting too frankly the practised skill of their execution). 1052 is also excellent; and, on the whole,—thinking over these, and other more irregular and skirmishing, but always well-meant, volunteer work sprinkled about the rooms,—I think the amateurs had better have an Academy of their own next year, in which indulgently, when they had room to spare, they might admit the promising effort of an artist.

[1] [Mr. Clifford, it is said, wrote to Ruskin, "saying that he greatly valued the advice of so eminent a critic, and that he would be highly delighted to know what this phrase actually meant. Mr. Ruskin's reply was characteristically whimsical. He told his correspondent to take a tumbler, place it bottom upwards, put half-a-dozen cherries round the tumbler, and send him a water-colour sketch of the subject; and then he would tell him his meaning. The artist, manfully going into the Valley of Humiliation, did as he was bidden, and sent the sketch. Mr. Ruskin returned the sketch, quietly asking why the shadow of cherry number six had been made broader than the shadow of number five, whereas it ought to have been narrower. The ingenuous painter humbly replied that, although he might have made a mistake, his object had been to elicit from the great master of artistic criticism some definite explanation of the enigmatical phrase above quoted. The answer to this was not enigmatical: 'If you can't draw a cherry, why do you presume to paint women's heads?'" (*The Family Herald*, March 18, 1876).]

[2] [Arcibald Stuart Wortley, now a well-known portrait-painter, had in 1874 the privilege of practical lessons in painting from Millais (see *Life and Letters*, ii. 61).]

[3] [1504. "Sir Theodore Martin." 1062. "John Hodgkin, Esq." 1052. "Nineteen" (by Lady Coleridge). All three were portraits in crayons. Several similar portraits by Samuel Laurence (1811–1884) are in the National Portrait Gallery (*e.g.*, of F. D. Maurice and Thackeray). Lady Coleridge (Jane Fortescue Seymour, *d.* 1878) was the first wife of the Lord Chief-Justice.]

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I have scarcely been able to glance round at the portrait sculpture; and am always iniquitously influenced, in judging of marble, by my humour for praise or dispraise of the model, rather than artist. Guarding myself, as well as I may, from such faultful bias, I yet venture to name 1342[1] as an exemplary piece of chiselling, carefully and tenderly composed in every touch. If the hair on the forehead were completely finished, this would be a nearly perfect bust. I cannot understand why the sculptor should have completed the little tress that falls on the cheek so carefully, and yet left so many unmodified contours in the more important masses.

1301. THOMAS CARLYLE. (*J. E. Boehm.*[2])

For this noble piece of portraiture I cannot trust myself to express my personal gratitude; nor does either the time I can give to these *Notes*, or their limited intention, permit me —if even otherwise I could think it permissible—to speak at all of the high and harmonious measure in which it seems to me to express the mind and features of my dear Master.

This only it is within the compass of my present purpose to affirm—that here is a piece of vital and essential sculpture; the result of sincere skill spent carefully on an object worthy its care; motive and method alike right; no pains spared, and none wasted. And any spectator of sensitiveness will find that, broadly speaking, all the sculpture round seems dead and heavy in comparison, after he has looked long at this.

There must always be, indeed, some difference in the immediate effect on our minds between the picturesque

[1] [1342. "Mrs. W. Cornwallis West": marble (G. Halse).]

[2] [Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm (1834–1890), born at Vienna, settled in London in 1862, and was afterwards naturalized. He was elected A.R.A. in 1878, and R.A. 1880. His work had a great vogue, and he was sculptor in ordinary to Queen Victoria. The portrait of Carlyle above noticed was a bust. The full-length seated statue, of which a replica in bronze is now in the gardens of Cheyne Walk, and which was probably Boehm's best work, was exhibited in 1882. Of Boehm's representation of Carlyle, Froude said that it was "as satisfactory a likeness in face and figure as could be rendered in sculpture; and the warm regard which had grown up between the artist and himself had enabled Mr. Boehm to catch with more than common success the shifting changes of his expression" (*Carlyle's Life in London*, ii. 460). Boehm also executed a medallion of Carlyle (see Garnett's *Carlyle*, p. 162). Boehm's bust of Ruskin is in the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford.]

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treatment proper in portrait sculpture, and that belonging, by its grace of reserve, to classical design. But it is generally a note of weakness in an Englishman when he thinks he can conceive like a Greek: so that the plurality of modern Hellenic Academy sculpture consists merely of imperfect anatomical models peeped at through bath-towels; and is in the essence of it quite as dull as it appears to be. Let us go back to less dignified work.

196. School Revisited. (*G. D. Leslie, A.*[1])

I came upon this picture early, in my first walk through the rooms, and was so delighted with it that it made me like everything else I saw that morning; it is altogether exquisite in rendering some of the sweet qualities of English girlhood, and, on the whole, the most easy and graceful composition in the rooms. I had written first, "masterly" composition; but no composition is quite masterly which modifies or subdues any of the natural facts so as to force certain relations between them. Mr. Leslie at present subdues all greens, refuses all but local darks, and scarcely permits himself, even in flesh, colour enough for life. Young ladies at a happy country boarding-school, like this, would be as bright as by the seaside; and there is no reason why a knowledge-gatherer, well cared for, should be less rosy than a samphire-gatherer.[2]

Rich colour may be in good taste, as well as the poorest; and the quaintness, politeness, and grace of Leslie might yet glow with the strength and freshness of Hook. It may perhaps be more difficult than I suppose to get the delicate lines and gradations, on which the expression of these girls mainly depends, in deeper colour. But, at all events, the whole should be more in harmony, and more consistently precious. English girls are, perhaps, not all of them,

[1] [For Ruskin's earlier notice of this artist, see above, p. 211.]

[2] [The reference is to the picture—"The Samphire-Gatherer"—by J. C. Hook, R.A., in the same exhibition.]



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St. Dorothys; but at least they are good enough to deserve to have their rose-leaves painted about them thoroughly.[1]

The little thing on the extreme left, with the hoop, is as pleasant a shadow of Nature as can be conceived in this kind; and I have no words to say how pretty she is.

But Mr. Leslie is in the very crisis of his artist life. His earlier pictures were finer in colour; and colour is the soul of painting.[2] If he could resolve to paint thoroughly, and give the colours of Nature as they are, he might be a really great painter, and almost hold, to Bonifazio,[3] the position that Reynolds held to Titian. But if he subdues his colour for the sake of black ribands, white dresses, or faintly idealized faces, he will become merely an Academic leaf of the "Magazin des Modes."

For the present, however, this picture, and the clay portrait of Carlyle, are, as far as my review reaches, the only two works of essential value in the Exhibition of this year —that is to say, the only works of quietly capable art, representing what deserved representation.

English girls, by an English painter. Whether you call them Madonnas, or saints, or what not, it is the law of art-life—your own people, as they live, are the only ones you can understand.[4] Only living Venice, done by Venetian—living Greece by Greek—living Scotland, perhaps, which has much loved Germany, by living Germany which has much reverenced Scotland: such expansion of law may be granted;[5] nay, the strangeness of a foreign country making an artist's sight of it shrewd and selective, may produce a sweet secondary form of beautiful art—your Spanish Lewis, your French Prout, your Italian Wilson, and their like—second-rate nevertheless, always. Not Lewis, but only Velasquez,

[1] [The legend of St. Dorothea, who after her martyrdom sent to St. Theophilus a basket of roses from the Garden of Paradise, is the subject of a picture by Burne-Jones.]

[2] [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 54); vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 8 *n.*; and *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 220).]

[3] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 370).]

[4] [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. pp. 229–231).]

[5] [As in the case of the portrait of Carlyle by Boehm.]

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can paint a perfect Spaniard; not Wilson, nor Turner, but only Carpaccio, can paint an Italian landscape. And, too fatally, the effort is destructive to the painters, beyond all resistance; and Lewis loses his animal power among the arabesques of Cairo, Turner his Yorkshire honesty at Rome, and Holman Hunt—painting the "Light of the World" in an English orchard—paints the gaslight of Bond Street in the Holy Land.[1]

English maids, I repeat, by an English painter,—that is all that an English Academy can produce of loveliest. There's another beautiful little one, by Mr. Leighton, with a purple drapery thrown over her that she may be called Fatima (215 and 345),[2] who would have been quite infinitely daintier in a print frock, and called Patty. And I fear there are no more, to speak of, by artists,* this year; the two vivid sketches, 222, 262, being virtually put out of court by their coarse work.[3] (Look close at the painting of the neck in the one, and of the left hand in the other.) Of English men, there are the Mayor, and the Chemist;[4] a vigorous squire or two; and the group of grand old soldiers at Chelsea[5]—a most notable, true, pathetic study, but scarcely artistic enough to be reckoned as of much more value than a good illustrative woodcut. Mr. Watts's portraits[6] are all conscientious and subtle, and of great present interest, yet not realistic enough to last. Exclusively I return to my

* But see note on 317, p. 287.

[1] [Holman Hunt painted the background of the "Light of the World" in a farmhouse orchard in Surrey, working by candle-light from 9 P.M. till 5 A.M.—*Contemporary Review*, May 1886: see Vol. XII. p. 331 *n.*]

[2] [215. "Portion of the Interior of the Grand Mosque of Damascus." 345. "Little Fatima."]

[3] [Both pictures by Millais. No. 222 was Miss Eveleen Tennant (Mrs. F. W. H. Myers). No. 262, called "No!" was a portrait of her sister, Miss Dorothy Tennant (now Lady Stanley).]

[4] [For the Mayor, see above, p. 286; the reference to the Chemist is perhaps to a marble bust of W. A. Miller, M.D., F.R.S., late Professor of Chemistry in King's College (No. 1272 in the Exhibition).]

[5] [898. "The Last Muster: Sunday at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea." By H. Herkomer (*b.* 1849, A.R.A. 1879, R.A. 1890).]

[6] [Watts's portraits in the Academy of 1875 were—188. "Sir Edward Sabine, K.C.B." 193. "Mr. F. W. Walker" (now High-master of St. Paul's School). 420. "The Late Marquis of Lothian."]

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Carlyle and the schoolgirls, as, the one, sure to abide against the beating of the time stream; and the other, possibly floating on it, discernible as a flower in foam.

## NATURAL HISTORY

There ought to be a separate room in our Academy for the exhibition of the magnificent work in scientific drawing and engraving, done, at present, almost without public notice, for the illustrations of great European works on Palæontology, Zoology, and Botany. The feeling, on the part of our artists, that an idle landscape sketch, or a clever caricature, may be admitted into their rooms as "artistic"; and that work which the entire energy of early life must be given to learn, and of late life to execute, is to be excluded, merely because it is thoroughly true and useful, is I hope likely to yield, some day, to the scientific enthusiasm which has prevailed often where it should have been resisted, and may surely therefore conquer, in time, where it has honourable claims.[1]

There is nothing of the kind, however, to be seen here hitherto; but I may direct attention under this head, rather than that of landscape, to the exquisite skill of delineation with which Mr. Cooke has finished the group of palm trees in his wonderful study of sunset at Denderah (448).[2] The sacrifice of colour in shadow for the sake of brilliancy in light, essentially a principle of Holland as opposed to Venice, is in great degree redeemed in this picture by the extreme care with which the relations of light are observed on the terms conceded: but surely, from so low sunset, the eastern slopes of the mountains on the left could not have been reached by so many rays?

[1] [In this connexion, see *Lectures on Art*, iv. ("The Relation of Art to Use"), where Ruskin dwells on the duties and opportunities of art in relation to Natural History.]

[2] [443. "The Mountains and Plain of Denderah on the Libyan bank of the Nile; doum and date palms, trees," etc.]

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To this division of our subject also must be referred Mr. Brett's "Spires and Steeples of the Channel Islands" (497), but with less praise; for since the days when I first endeavoured to direct the attention of a careless public to his conscientious painting of the Stonebreaker and Woodcutter,[1] he has gained nothing—rather, I fear, lost, in subtlety of execution, and necessitates the decline of his future power by persistently covering too large canvas. There is no occasion that a geological study should also be a geological map; and even his earlier picture, which I am honoured in possessing, of the Val d'Aosta,[2] would have been more precious to me if it had been only of half the Val d'Aosta.

The extreme distance here, however, beyond the promontory, is without any question the best bit of sea and atmosphere in the rooms. The paint on the water surface in the bay is too loaded, but laid with extreme science in alternations of colour.

At a still lower level, though deserving some position in the Natural History class for its essential, though rude, and apparently motiveless, veracity, must be placed "The Fringe of the Moor" (74).[3]

But why one should paint the fringe of the moor, rather than the breadth of it, merely for the privilege of carrying an ugly wooden fence all across the foreground, I must leave modern sentimentalists and naturalists to explain. Vestiges of the painter's former power of seeing true colour remain in the iridescent distance, but now only disgrace the gentle hillsides with their coarseness of harlequinade; and the daubed sky—daubed without patience even to

[1] [See above, p. 153.]
[2] [See above, p. 234.]
[3] [This picture, by Millais (now in the collection of Mr. Ismay), was painted in the autumn of 1874 "from the extreme end of the Rohallion ground, beyond the ruined village of Trochray, and close to Loch Kennard march. It used to be a favourite beat for black game" (*Life and Letters of Millais*, ii. 55). In a note on the Millais Exhibition of 1886, Ruskin made the following addendum to (or rather, emphatic repetition of) the criticism here:—

"The daubed sky—daubed without patience even to give unity of direction to the bristle marks—is without excuse, even in the rudest haste.—J. R., 1886."]

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give unity of direction to the bristle marks—seems to have been wrought in obtrusive directness of insult to every master, principle, and feeling, reverenced or experienced, in the schools of noble art, from its nativity to this hour.

And, closing the equivocal group of works in which Naturalism prevails unjustly over art, I am obliged to rank Mr. Leighton's interesting study of man in his Oriental function of scarecrow (symmetrically antithetic to his British one of game-preserver), 398.[1] It is, I do not doubt, anatomically correct; and, with the addition of the corn, the poppies, and the moon, becomes semi-artistic, so that I feel much compunction in depressing it into the Natural History class; and the more, because it partly forfeits its claim even to such position, by obscuring in twilight its really valuable delineation of the body, and disturbing our minds, in the process of scientific investigation, by sensational effects of after-glow, and lunar effulgence, which are disadvantageous, not to the scientific observer only, but to less learned spectators. For when simple and superstitious persons like myself, greatly susceptible to the influence of low stage-lamps and pink sidelights, first catch sight of the striding figure from the other side of the room, and take it, perhaps, for the angel with his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth, swearing there shall be Time no longer;[2] or for Achilles alighting from one of his lance-cast-long leaps on the shore of Scamander;[3] and find, on near approach, that all this grand straddling, and turning down of the gas, mean, practically, only a lad shying stones at sparrows, we are but too likely to pass on petulantly, without taking note of what is really interesting in this Eastern custom and skill—skill which I would recommend with all my heart to the imitation of the British game-preserver aforesaid, when the glorious end of Preservation is to be accomplished in Battue. Good slinging would involve more

[1] ["Eastern Slinger scaring Birds in the Harvest-time: Moonrise."]
[2] [Revelation x. 5, 6.]
[3] [See *Iliad*, xxi. 251: Πηλεΐδης δ' ἀπόρουσεν ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ δουρὸς ἐρωή.]

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healthy and graceful muscular action than even the finest shooting; and might, if we fully followed the Eastern example, be most usefully practised in other periods of the year, and districts of England, than those now consecrated to the sports of our aristocracy. I cannot imagine a more edifying spectacle than a British landlord in the middle of his farmer's cornfield, occupied in this entirely patriotic method of Protection.

The remainder of the pictures which I have to notice as belonging to the domain of Natural History, are of indubitable, though unpretending, merit. They represent indeed pure Zoology in its highest function of Animal Biography, which scientific persons will one day find requires much more learned investigation of its laws than the Thanatography which is at present their exclusive occupation and entertainment.

414. A Fascinating Tail. (*H. H. Couldery.*)

Quite the most skilful piece of minute and Düreresque painting in the exhibition[1]—(it cannot be rightly seen without a lens)—and in its sympathy with kitten nature, down to the most appalling depths thereof, and its tact and sensitiveness to the finest gradations of kittenly meditation and motion—unsurpassable. It seems hard to require of a painter who has toiled so much that, for this very reason, he should toil the more; but "The Little Epicure" (169) cannot be considered a picture till the cabbage leaves are as perfect as the fish.

1284. The First Taste. (*S. Carter.*[2])

Altogether enjoyable to me; and I am prepared to maintain (as a true lover of dogs, young and old), against

[1] [See above, p. 265.]
[2] [Samuel John Carter (1835–1892). A picture by him of deer is in the Tate Gallery (No. 1559).]

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all my heroic and tragically-minded friends, that this picture is exemplary in its choice of a moment of supreme puppy felicity as properest time for puppy portraiture. And I thankfully—and with some shame for my generally too great distrust of modern sentiment—acknowledge, before it, that there is a real element of fine benevolence towards animals in us, advanced quite infinitely, and into another world of feeling, from the days of Snyders and Rubens.[1] "The Little Wanderers" (1173), by this same painter, are a most pathetic and touching group of children in the wood. You may see, if you will take your opera-glass to it, that the robin is even promising to cover them with leaves, if indeed things are to end, as seems too probable. And compare, by the way, the still more meek and tender human destitution, "To be Left till Called for," 88,[2] which I am ashamed of myself for forgetting, as one of the pretty things that first encouraged me to write these *Notes*. "Nobody's Dog"[3] may console us with his more cynical view of his position in the wide world; and finally, Miss Acland's Platonic puppy (787[4]) shows us how events of the most unexpected, and even astounding, character, may be regarded, by a dog of sense, with entire moral tranquillity, and consequently with undisturbed powers of reflection and penetration.

How strange that I cannot add to my too short list of animal studies any, however unimportant, of Birds! (I do not count as deserving notice at all dramatic effects of vulture, raven, etc.) Not a nest—not a plume! English society now caring only for kingfishers' skins on its hat, and plovers' eggs on its plate.

[1] [For Ruskin's strictures on the boar and lion hunts of these painters as "shameful to humanity," see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 19.]
[2] [By A. Dixon.]
[3] [No. 427, by Miss E. L. Seeley.]
[4] ["The Intruder," by Miss A. Acland (daughter of Sir Henry Acland).]

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## LANDSCAPE

The distinction between Natural-Historic painting of scenery and true Landscape, is that the one represents objects as a Government Surveyor does, for the sake of a good account of the things themselves, without emotion, or definite purpose of expression. Landscape painting shows the relation between Nature and man; and, in fine work, a particular tone of thought in the painter's mind respecting what he represents.

I endeavoured, thirty years ago, in *Modern Painters*,[1] to explain this difference briefly, by saying that, in Natural History painting, the artist was only the spectator's horse; but, in Landscape painting, his friend.

The worst of such friendliness, however, is that a conceited painter may at last leave Nature out of the question altogether, and talk of himself only; and then there is nothing for it but to go back to the Government Surveyor. Mr. Brett, in his coast scene above noticed,[2] gives us things, without thoughts; and the fuliginous moralists above noticed, thoughts—such as they are—without things: by all means let us rather have the geographical synopsis.

### 415. Hoppers on the Road. (*W. Linnell.*)

This is a landscape, however; and, if it were more lightly painted, we might be very happy with it. Mr. Linnell cares no more than his father for brush dexterity; but he does no worse now, in that part of the business, than every one else. And what a relief it is, for any wholesome human sight, after sickening itself among the blank horrors of dirt,

[1] [The two great ends of landscape painting, said Ruskin in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, are the representation of facts and of thoughts. "In attaining the first end, the painter only places the spectator where he stands himself; he sets him before the landscape, and leaves him. The spectator is alone. . . . The artist is his conveyance, not his companion—his horse, not his friend" (Vol. III. p. 133).]

[2] [See p. 293; and for the following reference, p. 266.]

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ditch-water, and malaria, which the imitators of the French schools have begrimed our various Exhibition walls with, to find once more a bit of blue in the sky and a glow of brown in the coppice, and to see that Hoppers in Kent can enjoy their scarlet and purple—like empresses and emperors!

1199. Summer Days for Me. (*A. W. Hunt.*)

I am at some pause in expressing my pleasure in the realization of this beautiful scene, because I have personal interest in it, my own favourite summer walk being through this very field.[1] As, however, I was far away at Assisi when the artist painted it, and had nothing whatever to do with either the choice or treatment of his subject, it is not indecorous for me to praise a work in which I am able so securely to attest a fidelity of portraiture, happily persisted in without losing the grace of imagination.

It is the only picture of the year which I saw in the studio, and that by chance; for it is one of my fixed laws not to look at pictures before they take their fair trial in the Academy. But I ventured to find fault with the sky. The sky was courteously changed to please me; but I am encroaching enough to want it changed more. "Summer days are" *not* "for me," unless the sky is blue in them, and especially unless it looks—what simple mortals too often make it in reality—a great way off. I want this sky to look bluer at the top, and farther away at the bottom. The brook on the right is one of the very few pieces of stream which, this year, have been studied for their beauty, not their rage.

256. Wise Saws. (*J. C. Hook, R.A.*)

I suspect that many, even of the painter's admirers, pass this pretty sketch without noticing the humour with which

[1] [This picture was painted in and from a riverside meadow near Coniston, not far from Brantwood. The artist had been staying with Ruskin, and one of the first walks they took was to the spot from which Mr. Hunt afterwards made this picture.]

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he has expressed the gradations of feminine curiosity, scientific attention, and conscientious sense of responsibility, in the faces of the troop of cows who approach to investigate the nature of the noisy phenomenon upon the palings. It is a charming summer sketch, but scarcely worth sending to the Academy; and time was wasted by the good painter in carrying so far, what he felt his skill would be misapplied in carrying farther.

I am sure that Mr. Hook cannot lately have been reading his *Richard II.;* but whether the line quoted for his motto[1] chanced idly to occur to his memory, or was suggested to him by some acquaintance, he will, I trust, find a more decorous, as he easily may a more amusing, motto for his pretty cattle piece, before it becomes known in the picture-market as the parody of one of the most pathetic utterances in all Shakespearian tragedy.

### 123. On the River Mole. (*Birket Foster.*[2])

In doubt whether the spectator, without assistance, would see all the metaphysical distinctions between the cows in Mr. Hook's landscape, I need a more keen-sighted spectator's assistance to tell me, in Mr. Foster's, whether those animals on the opposite bank of the Mole are cows at all. If so, the trunks of the trees in the hedge beyond are about twenty yards in girth. What do our good water-colour painters mean by wasting their time in things like this (and I could name one or two who have done worse), for the sake of getting their names into the Academy catalogue?

[1] ["Am I both priest and clerk? Well then, amen" (Act iv. sc. 1).]

[2] [Myles Birket Foster (1825–1899), who became a member of the Old Water-Colour Society in 1862, was for many years one of the most popular water-colour artists. In *The Art of England* (Lecture iv.), Ruskin, after praising Mrs. Allingham's rustic idyls, makes "mention, with sincere gratitude, of the like motives in the paintings of Mr. Birket Foster; but with regret that in too equal, yet incomplete, realization of them, mistaking, in many instances, mere spotty execution for finish, he has never taken the high position that was open to him as an illustrator of rustic life."]

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69, 81. THE HORSE-DEALER. CROSSING THE MOOR.[1]

I have not looked long enough at these to justify me in saying more of them than that they should not be here on the line. That much I *must* say, and emphatically.

265. (I venture to supply a title, the painter seeming to have been at a loss.[2]) A Wild Rose, remarkable in being left on its stalk, demonstrates to the poet Campbell that there has been a garden in this locality.

Little thought I, when I wrote the first line of *Modern Painters*, that a day would come when I should have to say of a modern picture what I must say of this. When I began my book, Wilkie was yet living; and though spoiled by his Spanish ambition,[3] the master's hand was yet unpalsied, nor had lost its skill of practice in its pride. Turner was in his main colour-strength, and the dark room of the Academy had, every year, its four or five painted windows, bright as the jewel casements of Aladdin's palace, and soft as a king-fisher's wings. Mulready was at the crowning summit of his laborious skill; and the "Burchell and Sophia in the Hayfield," and the "Choosing of the Wedding Dress,"[4]

[1] [No. 69, by C. E. Johnson, landscape-painter (*b.* 1832). No. 81, by Peter Graham (*b.* 1836, A.R.A. 1877, R.A. 1881).]

[2] [This picture, by Millais, known as "The Deserted Garden," had no title in the catalogue, but a quotation was given from Campbell's lines, "Written on Visiting a Scene in Argyleshire":—

"Yet wandering, I found on my ruinous walk,
By the dial-stone, aged and green,
One rose of the wilderness left on its stalk,
To mark where the garden had been."

The picture was painted from the end of the upper garden terrace of St. Mary's Tower, Birnam. It is now in the possession of Mrs. Thwaites. "Never mind what other people may say about your picture," wrote Millais; "it is, and always will remain, one of the very best works I ever did" (*Life and Letters of Millais*, ii. 58).]

[3] [For Ruskin's early references to Wilkie, see *Poetry of Architecture* (Vol. I. p. 7), and *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. pp. 82, 91 *n.*); and for the painter's "Spanish ambition," see Vol. XII. p. 152.]

[4] ["Choosing the Wedding Dress," exhibited 1846, is now in the South Kensington Museum (Sheepshanks' collection). "Burchell and Sophia" (or "Haymaking") was exhibited in 1847. For another reference to these pictures, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 336).]

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remain in my mind as standards of English effort in rivalship with the best masters of Holland. Constable's clumsy hand was honest, and his flickering sunshine fair. Stanfield, sea-bred, knew what a ship was, and loved it; knew what rocks and waves were, and wrought out their strength and sway with steadiest will. David Roberts, though utterly destitute of imagination, and incapable of colour, was at least a practised draughtsman in his own field of architectural decoration; loved his Burgos or Seville cathedral fronts as a woman loves lace; and drew the details of Egyptian hieroglyph with dutiful patience, not to show his own skill, but to keep witness of the antiquity he had the wisdom to reverence; while, not a hundred yards from the Academy portico, in the room of the Old Water-Colour, Lewis was doing work which surpassed, in execution, everything extant since Carpaccio;[1] and Copley Fielding, Robson, Cox, and Prout were every one of them, according to their strength, doing true things with loving minds.

The like of these last-named men, in simplicity and tenderness of natural feeling, expressing itself with disciplined (though often narrow) skill, does not, so far as I can see, now exist in the ranks of art-labourers; and even of men doing their absolute best according to their knowledge, it would be difficult to find many among the most renowned exhibitors of London and Paris;—while here, full on the line, with highest Academic name, and hailed by explosive applause from the whole nation, here is—— I cannot use strength of words enough to tell you what it is, unless you will first ascertain for yourselves what it is *not*.

Get what good you can of it, or anything else in the rooms to-day; but to-morrow, or when next you mean to come to the Academy, go first for half an hour into the National Gallery, and look closely and thoroughly at the painting of the soldier's helmet and crimson plume in John Bellini's "Peter Martyr"; at the horse-bridle in the

[1] [For Ruskin's "discovery" of Carpaccio, see Vol. IV. p. 356 *n.*]

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large, nameless Venetian picture of the Madonna and kneeling Knight; at the herbage in the foreground of Mantegna's "Madonna"; and at Titian's columbines and vine in the "Bacchus and Ariadne."[1] All these are examples of true painter's work in minor detail; unsurpassable, but not, by patience and modesty, inimitable. There was once a day when the painter of this (*soi-disant*) landscape promised to do work as good. If, coming straight from that to this, you like this best, be properly thankful for the blessings of modern science and art, and for all the good guidance of Kensington and Messrs. Agnew. But if you think that the four-petalled rose, the sprinkle of hips looking like ill-drawn heather, the sun-dial looking like an ill-drawn fountain, the dirty birch tree, and the rest—whatever it is meant for—of the inarticulate brown scrabble, are not likely to efface in the eyes of future generations the fame of Venice and Etruria, you have always the heroic consolation given you in the exclamation of the *Spectator:* "If we must choose between a Titian and a Lancashire cotton-mill, give us the cotton-mill."[2]

Literally, here you have your cotton-mill employed in its own special Art-produce. Here you have, what was once the bone and sinew of a great painter, ground and carded

[1] ["Peter Martyr" is No. 812, and is by some attributed rather to Gentile Bellini; for other references to the picture, see *Verona and its Rivers*, § 27; *Aratra Pentelici*, § 221; and *Lectures on Landscape*, §§ 11, 77, 94. The "nameless Venetian picture" is No. 234, now ascribed to Catena. The Mantegna is No. 274; for another reference, see *Catalogue of the Educational Series*. The "Bacchus and Ariadne" is No. 35; for other references, see above, p. 21 *n.*]

[2] [The "exclamation" occurs in a review of Ruskin's Oxford *Lectures on Art*, August 6, 1870. The reviewer took up the statement (§ 123) that "before you can have a school of art, you must find places elsewhere than in England, or at least in otherwise unserviceable parts of England, for the establishment of manufactories needing the help of fire." The economic consequences of the literal adoption of this maxim were set forth, and the reviewer said: "Art is noble as the flower of life, and the creations of a Titian are a great heritage of the race; but if England could secure high art and Venetian glory of colour only by the sacrifice of her manufacturing supremacy, and by the acceptance of national poverty, then the pursuit of such artistic achievement would imply that we had ceased to possess natures of manly strength, or to know the meaning of moral aims. If we must choose between a Titian and a Lancashire cotton-mill, then, in the name of manhood and morality, give us the cotton-mill." Ruskin refers again to this passage in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 7.]

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down into black-podded broom-twigs. That is what has come to pass upon him; that, *his* finding on his "ruinous walk" over the diabolic Tom Tiddler's ground of Manchester and Salford. Threshed under the mammon flail into threads and dust, and shoddy-fodder for fools; making manifest yet, with what ragged remnant of painter's life is in him, the results of mechanical English labour on English land. Not here the garden of the sluggard, green with rank weeds; not here the garden of the Deserted Village, overgrown with ungathered balm; not here the noble secrecy of a virgin country, where the falcon floats and the wild goat plays;—but here the withering pleasance of a fallen race, who have sold their hearths for money, and their glory for a morsel of bread.

231. The Quarries of Holmeground, Lancashire. (*J. S. Raven.*)

The painter has real feeling of the sublimity of hill forms, and has made the most of his Langdale pikes. But it is very wonderful that in all this Academy, so far as I have yet seen, there is not a single patient study of a mossy rock. Now the beauty of foreground stone is to be mossy, as the beauty of a beast is to be furry; and a quarried rock is to a natural one what a skinned leopard is to a live one. Even if, as a simple painter, and no huntsman, one liked one's leopard or tiger better dead than alive, at least let us have him dead in his integrity; or—if so much as that cannot be—for pictorial purpose it is better to have, as in No. 697,[1] the skin without the tiger, than, as here, the tiger without the skin. (No. 697, by the way, should have been named in the Natural History class, for a good study as far as it reaches, and there may be more substantial drawing in it than I can see at the height where it is hung.)

Another sorrowful character in the mountain-painting of this year, is the almost total absence of any attempt to

[1] [697. "Tigers" (W. Huggins).]

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render calm and full sunshine. 564 and 368[1] are, I think, the only exceptions, though scarcely worth noticing except as such; unless the latter, for the extreme and singular beauty of the natural scene it represents. The "Mountain Twilight," 759, W. C. Eddington, is evidently a pure and careful study of evening air among noble hills. What an incomparably ridiculous mob this London mob is!—to let some square leagues of room lie about its metropolis in waste brickfield, and occupy immeasurable space of wall with advertisements of pills and pictures of newly-opened shops; and lift a lovely little drawing like this simply—out of its way.

237. RICHMOND HILL. (*Vicat Cole, A.*[2])

The passages on the left, under the trees, of distant and subdued light, in their well-studied perfection, are about the most masterly things in landscape work in this exhibition; but has the painter never in his life seen the view from Richmond Hill on a clear day? Such a thing is still possible; and when it happens, is the time to paint that distance, or at least (for the passages on the left imply mist) when the indistinctness of it may be in golden mist, not gas fume. The last line quoted from Thomson[3] seems to have been written prophetically, to describe the England of our own day. But Thomson was never thinking of real smoke when he wrote it. He was as far from imagining that English landscape would ever be stifled in floating filth, as that the seasons should stop rolling, or April not know itself from November. He means merely the warm mist of an extreme horizon; and has at least given us something

[1] [564. "Near King's House, Glencoe" (T. G. Cooper). 368. "A Valley in Wales" (George Sant).]

[2] [George Vicat Cole (1833–1893, A.R.A. 1870, R.A. 1880).]

[3] ["What a goodly prospect spreads around
Of hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires,
And glittering towns, and gilded streams, till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays."]

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to look at before we come to it. What has Mr. Vicat Cole done with all those hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires, which he leads us to expect?

I think I never saw a large picture so much injured by a little fault, as this is by the white wake of the farthest boat on the river. As a fact, it is impossible;—as a white line, it cuts all to pieces.

651. THE HEAD OF A HIGHLAND GLEN. (*F. C. Newcome.*[1])

The best study of torrent, including distant and near water, that I find in the rooms: 1075 ["Storm and Flood"] has been most carefully and admirably studied from Nature by Mr. Raven: only what is the use of trying to draw water with charcoal? and what makes nearly all the painters this year choose to paint their streams in a rage, and foul with flood, instead of in their beauty and constant beneficence? Our manufacturers have still left, in some parts of England and Scotland, streams of what may be advertised in the bills of Natural Scenery as "real water"; and I myself know several so free from pollution that one can sit near them with perfect safety, even when they are not in flood.

The rest of this mountain scene by Mr. Newcome is also carefully studied, and very right and good.

756. THE LLUGWY AT CAPEL CURIG. (*J. J. Curnock.*)

I find this to be the most attentive and refined landscape of all here—too subdued in its tone for my own pleasure, but skilful and affectionate in a high degree; and one of the few exceptions to my general statement above made, for here is a calm stream patiently studied. The distant woods and hills are all very tender and beautiful.

[1] ["Frederick Clive Newcome" (1847–1894), whose family name was Suker, exhibited for several years from 1875 onwards. He died at Coniston.]



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686[1] is also a singularly careful and unassumingly true drawing; but are the town and rail not disquieted enough, that we should get no rest in a village?

## POLICY

We finally inquire what our British artists have to say to us on the subject of good Government, and its necessary results—what triumph they express in the British Constitution and its present achievements.

In old times all great artistic nations were pictorially talkative, chiefly, next to religion, on the subject of Government. Venice, Florence, and Siena did little else than expound, in figures and mythic types, the nature of civic dignity, statesmanly duty, and senatorial or soldierly honour; and record, year by year, the events conducive to their fame.

I have not exhaustively overlooked the Academy; but, except Miss Thompson's study of a battle fought just "sixty years since,"[2]—I find no English record of any important military or naval achievement; and the only exhibition of the mode in which Britannia at present rules the waves is Mr. Cooke's "*Devastation*" being reviewed;[3] —somewhat sable and lugubrious as a national spectacle, dubious as a national triumph, and, to myself, neither in colour nor sentiment enjoyable, as the pictures of *Victorys* and *Téméraires* one used to see in days of simpler warfare. And of political achievement there seems still less consciousness or regard in the British artist; so that future generations will ask in vain for any aid to their

[1] ["Fair-Day, South Petherton, Somersetshire" (Miss L. Rayner).]

[2] [*Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since.* In the introductory chapter, Scott explains "how much the painter of antique or of fashionable manners gains over him who delineates those of the last generation." See below, p. 373.]

[3] ["No. 232. H.M. turret-ship *Devastation* at Spithead on the occasion of the naval review in honour of the Shah of Persia, July 23, 1873." Presented to the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, by the present Lord Brassey.]

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imagination of the introduction of Dr. Kenealy to the Speaker,[1] or any other recent triumph of the British Constitution.

The verdict of existing British Art on existing British Policy is therefore, if I understand it rightly, that we have none; but, in the battle of life, have arrived at declaration of an universal *sauve qui peut*—or explicitly, to all men, Do as you like, and get what you can. Something other than this may, however, be gathered, it seems to me, from the two records given us of the war—so unwise, and yet so loyal—of sixty years ago.

### 613. La Charge des Cuirassiers Français à Waterloo. (*Philippoteau.*[2])

This carefully-studied and most skilful battle piece is but too likely to be overlooked in the confused rush to Miss Thompson's more attractive composition. And of all in the Academy, this is the picture which an Englishman, of right feeling, would least wish to overlook. I remember no so impartial and faithful representation of an historical battle. I know no war painting by the artists of any great race, however modest, in which the object has not hitherto been definitely—self-laudation. But here is a piece of true war history, of which it is not possible to say, by observance of any traceable bias, whether a Frenchman or Englishman painted it. Such a picture is more honourable to France than the taking of the Malakoff.

[1] [Edward Vaughan Kenealy (1819–1880), at that time notorious for his conduct as counsel for "the claimant" in the Tichborne case, had been elected at a by-election for Stoke-upon-Trent. He came to the table on February 18, 1875, to be sworn, without being introduced by two members, according to custom. The Speaker, in accordance with a resolution of the House passed in 1688, and uniformly observed since that time, called upon Dr. Kenealy to find two members to introduce him. A debate ensued; ultimately, on the motion of Mr. Disraeli, the resolution was dispensed with on that occasion, and Dr. Kenealy was called to the table and sworn. Feeling ran high against Dr. Kenealy, and it was explained that he had been unable to find two members willing to accompany him.]

[2] [Felix Emmanuel Henri Philippoteau (1814–1884).]

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I never approached a picture with more iniquitous prejudice against it than I did Miss Thompson's:[1] partly because I have always said that no woman could paint;[2] and, secondly, because I thought what the public made such a fuss about *must* be good for nothing.

But it is amazon's work this; no doubt of it, and the first fine Pre-Raphaelite* picture of battle we have had;—profoundly interesting, and showing all manner of illustrative and realistic faculty. Of course, all that need be said of it, on this side, must have been said twenty times over in the journals; and it remains only for me to make my tardy genuflexion, on the trampled corn, before this Pallas of Pall Mall, and to murmur my poor words of warning to her, that she remember in her day of triumph how it came to pass that Atalanta was stayed, and Camilla slain.[3]

Camilla-like the work is—chiefly in its refinement, a quality I had not in the least expected, for the cleverest

* Miss Thompson may perhaps not in the least know herself for a sister of the school. But the entire power of her picture, as of her own mind, depends first on her resolution to paint things as they really are, or were, and not as they might be poetically fancied to be. See above, the note on 218, p. 267.

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[1] [No. 353. "The 28th Regiment at Quatre Bras." Miss Elizabeth Thompson had become famous in 1874 by her "Roll Call." In 1877 she married the well-known soldier, traveller, and author, Sir William Butler. One of her pictures—"The Remnants of an Army"—is in the Tate Gallery (No. 1553).]

[2] [Thus in a letter of 1858 he had written:—

> "Dear Miss Sinnett,—I am quite delighted with your sketches, they are full of exquisite perception and feeling. You *must* resolve to be quite a great paint*ress*; the feminine termination does not exist, there never having been such a being as yet as a lady who could paint. Try and be the first. The sketches will come to-morrow early.—Most truly yours,
>
> "J. Ruskin."

(This letter was sold at Sotheby's, March 22, 1890, and re-sold there, April 9, 1891. It was printed in the *Daily Chronicle*, April 10, 1891. The date is fixed by the water-mark on the paper.) The partial recantation here expressed was confirmed and expanded by Ruskin a few years later, in consequence of his admiration for the drawings of Miss Francesca Alexander. (See *The Art of England*, Lecture i.)]

[3] [The story of Atalanta, who picked up the golden balls and was stayed in her course, is glanced at by Ruskin in *Val d'Arno*, § 19; he refers to Virgil's account of Camilla, who was tempted by success to dare too much, in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 76.]

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women almost always show their weakness in endeavours to be dashing. But actually, here, what I suppose few people would think of looking at, the sky is the most tenderly painted, and with the truest outlines of cloud, of all in the exhibition; and the terrific piece of gallant wrath and ruin on the extreme right, where the cuirassier is catching round the neck of his horse as he falls, and the convulsed fallen horse just seen through the smoke below, is wrought, through all the truth of its frantic passion, with gradations of colour and shade which I have not seen the like of since Turner's death.

I place these two paintings under the head of "Policy," because it seems to me that, especially before the Quatre Bras, one might wisely consider with Mr. Carlyle, and with oneself, what was the "net upshot" and meaning of our modern form of the industry of war.[1] Why should these wild and well-meaning young Irish lads have been brought, at great expense, all the way to Four Arms, merely to knock equally wild and well-meaning young French lads out of their saddles into their graves; and take delight in doing so? and why should the English and French squires at the head of their regiments have, practically, no other object in life than deceiving these poor boys, and an infinite mob besides of such others, to their destruction?

Think of it. Suppose this picture, as well as the one I was so happy in praising of Mr. Collinson's, had been called—as it, also, quite properly might have been—"Sunday Afternoon" (only dating June 18th, 1815). Suppose the two had been hung side by side. And, to complete our materials for meditation, suppose Mr. Nicol's[2] "The Sabbath Day" (1159)—which I observed the *Daily Telegraph* called

[1] [See *Sartor Resartus*, book ii. ch. viii.: "What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net purpose and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain 'Natural Enemies' of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men," etc. Compare Ruskin's *Munera Pulveris*, preface. Passages in Ruskin dealing with the ethics of war (not always in the same sense as here) are numerous. See, *e.g.*, *Crown of Wild Olive*, Lecture iii.; *Two Paths*, § 196; *Modern Painters*, vol. iii., end of ch. xviii.]

[2] [Erskine Nicol (1825–1904), A.R.A. 1866.]

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an exquisitely comic picture,[1] but which I imagine Mr. Nicol meant for a serious one, representing the conscientious Scottish mountain-matron setting out for the place where she may receive her cake of spiritual oatmeal, baken on the coals of Presbyterian zeal;—suppose, I say, this ideal of Scottish Sabbath occupation placed beside M. Philippoteau's admirable painting of the Highland regiment at evening missionary service in that sweet and fruitful foreign land; while Miss Thompson enables us also, thus meditating in our fields at eventide, to consider, if not the Lilies, at least the Poppies of them; and to understand how in *this* manner of friction of ears of corn—by his bent knees instead of his fingers—the modern Christian shows that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath?[2]

"Well—and if this were so done—should we not feel that the peace of the cottage, and the honour of the mountain-side, were guarded and won for them by that mighty Evening Service, with the thunder of its funeral march rolled deep among the purple clouds?"

No! my soldier friends—no! do not think it. They were, and are, guarded and won by silent virtues of the hearth and the rock, which must endure until the time when the prayer we pray in our every Sabbath Litany—to be delivered from battle, murder, and sudden death—shall have been offered with sincere hearts, fervently; and so found its way at last to the audience of Heaven.

[1] [May 1, 1875: "Mr. Erskine Nicol's almost inimitably comic picture of an old Scottish dame going to the kirk on the Sabbath."]
[2] [Matthew vi. 28; Mark ii. 27.]

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# LIST OF ARTISTS AND WORKS

MENTIONED IN

# "ACADEMY NOTES"

(1855–1859, 1875)

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[*Bibliographical Note.*—A General Index (of artists and pictures, not of topics) to Ruskin's series of *Academy Notes* was compiled in 1885 by Mr. John Morgan, of Aberdeen, and privately printed by him in two editions :—

*First Edition* (1885).—An octavo pamphlet of 16 pages, with the following title-page :—

> Mr. Ruskin's Notes | on some of | The Principal Pictures | Exhibited in the Rooms of the Royal Academy | etc., etc., | i.–vi. | 1855–1875.

On the reverse of the title-page is the imprint—"The Aberdeen University Press"; prefatory note (with blank reverse), pp. 3–4; text of the index, pp. 5–15. No headlines, the pages being numbered centrally. Issued at Christmas, 1885, in pale blue wrappers, unlettered. Twenty-five copies were printed.

*Second Edition* (1890).—An octavo pamphlet of 16 pages, with the following title-page :—

> Index to Mr. Ruskin's Notes | on some of | the Principal Pictures | Exhibited in the Rooms of the | Royal Academy, | etc., etc., | Compiled by J. M. | Printed for Private Circulation Only. | Aberdeen. | 1890.

On the reverse of the title-page is the imprint—"The Aberdeen University Press"; on p. 3 the compiler's "Note," dated December 25, 1889; on p. 4, statement of the editions of the *Academy Notes* from which the index is compiled; text of the index, pp. 5–16. No headlines, the pages being numbered centrally. Issued in grey paper wrappers, lettered "Index to Mr. Ruskin's Academy Notes." Twenty-five copies were printed, and also ten on large paper (quarto). The whole thirty-five were numbered on p. 2 of the wrapper.

Mr. Morgan's Index was far from complete. A fuller index to *Academy Notes* was compiled in 1902 for the General Index in volume ii. of *Ruskin on Pictures* (pp. 353–375). So much of that index as refers to the pictures of painters who were mentioned in *Academy Notes* is here given. The other entries are incorporated in the General Index to this edition.]

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# LIST OF ARTISTS

## AND WORKS MENTIONED IN "ACADEMY NOTES" (1855–1859, 1875)

[R.A. = *exhibited at the Royal Academy*; O.W.C.S., *Old (now Royal) Society of Painters in Water-Colours*; N.W.C.S., *New Society, etc. (now Royal Institute)*; F.E., *exhibited at the French Gallery*; S.B.A., *Society of British Artists (now Royal Society, etc.)*; B.I., *British Institution. Where two or more references to pages follow a picture, and the first is not the first in order of number, it is the principal reference.*]


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# PART II

# LETTERS AND PAPERS ON PICTURES AND ARTISTS

(1858–1887)

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## 1

## PRE-RAPHAELITISM IN LIVERPOOL[1]

[1858]

I BELIEVE the Liverpool Academy has, in its decisions of late years, given almost the first instance on record of the entirely just and beneficial working of academical system. Usually such systems have degenerated into the application of formal rules, or the giving partial votes, or the distribution of a partial patronage; but the Liverpool awards have indicated at once the keen perception of new forms of excellence, and the frank honesty by which alone such new forms can be confessed and accepted. I do not, however, wonder at the outcry. People who suppose the Pre-Raphaelite work to be only a condition of meritorious eccentricity, naturally suppose, also, that the consistent preference of it can only be owing to clique. Most people look upon paintings as they do on plants or minerals, and think they ought to have in their collections specimens of everybody's work, as they have specimens of all earths or flowers. They have no conception that there is such a thing as a real right and wrong, a real bad and good, in the question. However, you need not, I think, much mind.

[1] [For the circumstances in which this letter was written, see above, Introduction, p. xxxi. The prize of the Liverpool Academy had been awarded to Millais's "Blind Girl." Popular feeling, however, favoured another picture, the "Waiting for the Verdict" of A. Solomon. As one of the judges, and as a member of the Academy, Mr. Alfred Hunt addressed a letter on the matter to Ruskin, the main portion of whose reply was sent by him to the *Liverpool Albion*, where it appeared on January 11, 1858. Mr. Solomon's picture had been exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1857 (No. 562), and is mentioned in Ruskin's *Notes* to the pictures of that year (see above, p. 114). Millais's picture is described by Ruskin in *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 4. The letter was reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. pp. 108–109. "Rosetti" is here corrected to "Rossetti."]



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Let the Academy be broken up on the quarrel; let the Liverpool people buy whatever rubbish they have a mind to; and when they see, as in time they will, that it *is* rubbish, and find, as find they will, every Pre-Raphaelite picture gradually advance in influence and in value, you will be acknowledged to have borne a witness all the more noble and useful, because it seemed to end in discomfiture; though it will *not* end in discomfiture. I suppose I need hardly say anything of my own estimate of the two pictures on which the arbitrement has arisen. I have surely said often enough, in good black type already, what I thought of Pre-Raphaelite works, and of other modern ones. Since Turner's death I consider that any average work from the hand of any of the four leaders of Pre-Raphaelitism (Rossetti, Millais, Hunt, John Lewis,) is, singly, worth at least *three* of any other pictures whatever by living artists.

JOHN RUSKIN.

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## 2

## GENERALIZATION AND THE SCOTCH PRE-RAPHAELITES

[1858]

*To the Editor of the "Witness"*[1]

I was very glad to see that good and firm defence of the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers in the *Witness*[2] the other day; only, my dear Editor, it appears to me that you take too much trouble in the matter. Such a lovely picture as that of Waller Paton's must either speak for itself, or nobody can speak for it. If you Scotch people don't know a bit of your own country when you see it, who is to help you to know it? If, in that mighty wise town of Edinburgh, everybody still likes flourishes of brush better than ferns, and dots of paint better than birch leaves, surely there is nothing for it but to leave them in quietude of devotion to dot and faith in flourish. At least I can see no other way of dealing. All those platitudes from the *Scotsman*, which you took the pains to answer, have been answered ten thousand times already, without the smallest effect,—the kind of people who utter them being always too misty in their notions ever to feel or catch an answer. You may as well speak to the air, or rather to a Scotch mist. The oddest part of the business is, that all those wretched fallacies about generalization might be quashed or crushed in

[1] [This letter appeared in the *Witness* (Edinburgh) on March 27, 1858, and was reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. pp. 110–114.]

[2] [The defence was made in a second notice (March 6, 1858) of the Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy, then open to the public. The picture of Mr. Waller Paton (now R.S.A.) alluded to here was entitled "Wild Water, Inveruglas" (161); he also exhibited one of "Arrochar Road, Tarbet" (314). The "platitudes" of the *Scotsman* against the Pre-Raphaelites were contained in its second notice of the Exhibition (February 20, 1858).]



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an instant, by reference to any given picture of any great master who ever lived. There never was anybody who generalized, since paint was first ground, except Opie, and Benjamin West, and Fuseli,[1] and one or two other such modern stars—in their own estimates,—night-lights, in fact, extinguishing themselves, not odoriferously at daybreak, in a sputter in the saucer. Titian, Giorgione, Veronese, Tintoret, Raphael, Leonardo, Correggio,—never any of them dreamt of generalization, and would have rejected the dream as having come by the horn gate,[2] if they had. The only difference between them and the Pre-Raphaelites is, that the latter love nature better, and don't yet know their artist's business so well, having everything to find out for themselves athwart all sorts of contradiction, poor fellows; so they are apt to put too much into their pictures—for love's sake, and then not to bring this much into perfect harmony; not yet being able to bridle their thoughts entirely with the master's hand. I don't say therefore—I never have said—that their pictures are faultless,—many of them have gross faults; but the modern pictures of the generalist school, which are opposed to them, have nothing else but faults: they are not pictures at all, but pure daubs and perfect blunders; nay, they have never had aim enough to be called anything so honourable as blunders; they are mere emptinesses and idlenesses,—thistledown without seeds, and bubbles without colour;[3] whereas the worst Pre-Raphaelite picture has something *in* it; and the great ones, such as Windus's "Burd Helen,"[4] will hold their own with the most noble pictures of all time.

Always faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

[1] [For the "daubing" of West, see above, p. 160; and for "poor fumigatory" Fuseli, Vol. V. p. 108.]

[2] [There is some error here, as it is the *true* dreams that come through the horn gate, while the fruitless ones pass through the gate of *ivory: Odyssey*, xix. 562; compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 38).]

[3] [See Ruskin's preface to *Arrows of the Chace* (reprinted in a later volume of this edition), where he comments on these words.]

[4] [See above, p. 85.]

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By the way, what ails you at our Pre-Raphaelite Brothers' conceits? Windus's heart's-ease might have been a better conceit, I grant you;[1] but for the conceits themselves, as such, I always enjoy them particularly; and I don't understand why I shouldn't. What's wrong in them?

[1] [The *Witness* had objected to the "astonishing fondness" of the Pre-Raphaelite school for "conceits," instancing as typically far-fetched that in the picture of "Burd Helen," where Lord John was represented "pulling to pieces a heart's-ease," as he crosses the stream.]

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## 8

## JOHN LEECH'S OUTLINES[1]

[1872]

I am honoured by the request of the sister of John Leech that I should give some account of the drawings of her brother, which remain in her possession; and I am able to fulfil her request without departing from the rule which has always bound me, not to allow any private interest to weigh with me in speaking of matters which concern the public. It is merely and simply a matter of public concern that the value of these drawings should be known and measures taken for their acquisition, or, at least, for obtaining a characteristic selection from them, as a National property. It cannot be necessary for me, or for any one now to praise the work of John Leech. Admittedly it contains the finest definition and natural history of the classes of our society, the kindest and subtlest analysis of its foibles, the tenderest flattery of its pretty and well-bred ways, with which the modesty of subservient genius ever amused or immortalized careless masters. But it is not generally known how much more valuable, as art, the first sketches for the woodcuts were than the finished drawings, even before those drawings sustained any loss in engraving.

John Leech was an absolute master of the elements of

[1] [From p. 4 of the *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Outlines by the late John Leech, at the Gallery, 9 Conduit Street, Regent Street, 1872.* The exhibition was held nearly eight years after Leech's death on October 29, 1864; for the circumstances of it, see above, Introduction, p. xxxii. Ruskin's letter was given *in extenso* in a review of the exhibition in the *Times* of May 8, 1872, and was reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. pp. 161–164. For other references to Leech, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 471), and Lecture v., on Leech and Tenniel, in *The Art of England*.]



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character—but not by any means of those of *chiaroscuro*,—and the admirableness of his work diminished as it became elaborate. The first few lines in which he sets down his purpose are invariably of all drawing that I know the most wonderful in their accurate felicity and prosperous haste. It is true that the best possible drawing, whether slight or elaborate, is never hurried. Holbein or Titian, if they lay only a couple of lines, yet lay them quietly, and leave them entirely right. But it needs a certain sternness of temper to do this.

Most, in the prettiest sense of the word, *gentle* artists indulge themselves in the ease, and even trust to the felicity of rapid—and even in a measure inconsiderate—work in sketching, so that the beauty of a sketch is understood to be consistent with what is partly unintentional.

There is, however, one condition of extreme and exquisite skill in which haste may become unerring. It cannot be obtained in completely finished work; but the hands of Gainsborough, Reynolds, or Tintoret often nearly approach completion at full speed, and the pencil sketches of Turner are expressive almost in the direct ratio of their rapidity.

But of all rapid and condensed realization ever accomplished by the pencil, John Leech's is the most dainty, and the least fallible, in the subjects of which he was cognizant. Not merely right in the traits which he seizes, but refined in the sacrifice of what he refuses.

The drawing becomes slight through fastidiousness, not indolence, and the finest discretion has left its touches rare.

In flexibility and lightness of pencilling, nothing but the best outlines of Italian masters with the silver point can be compared to them. That Leech sketched English squires instead of saints, and their daughters instead of martyrs, does not in the least affect the question respecting skill of pencilling; and I repeat deliberately that nothing but the best work of sixteenth-century Italy with the silver point exists in art, which in rapid refinement these playful English drawings do not excel. There are too many of them

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(fortunately) to be rightly exemplary—I want to see the collection divided, dated carefully, and selected portions placed in good light, in a quite permanent arrangement, in each of our great towns in connection with their drawing schools.

I will not indeed have any in Oxford while I am there, because I am afraid that my pupils should think too lightly of their drawing as compared with their other studies, and I doubt their studying anything else but John Leech if they had him to study. But in our servile schools of mechanical drawing, to see what drawing was indeed, which could represent something better than machines and could not be mimicked by any machinery, would put more life into them than any other teaching I can conceive.

It is, therefore, with the greatest pleasure that I accept the honour of having my name placed on the committee for obtaining funds for the purchase of these drawings;[1] and I trust that the respect of the English public for the gentle character of the master, and their gratitude for the amusement with which he has brightened so many of their days, will be expressed in the only way in which expression is yet possible, by due care and wise use of the precious possessions he has left to them.

J. RUSKIN.

[1] [The drawings were not, however, bought in the way suggested. In 1885 the three sisters of John Leech were given small pensions on the Civil List.]

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4

## ERNEST GEORGE'S ETCHINGS[1]

[1873]

*To the Editor of the "Architect"*

MY DEAR SIR,—I am entirely glad you had permission to publish some of Mr. Ernest George's etchings;[2] they are the most precious pieces of work I have seen for many a day, though they are still, like nearly everything the English do best in art, faultful in matters which might have been easily conquered, and not a little wasteful, sometimes of means and time; I should be glad, therefore, of space enough in your columns to state, with reference to these sketches, some of the principles of etching which I had not time to define in the lectures on engraving I gave this year, at Oxford,[3] and which are too often forgotten even by our best draughtsmen.

I call Mr. George's work precious, chiefly because it

[1] [This letter appeared in the *Architect*, December 27, 1873, and was reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. pp. 165–169. Mr. Ernest George (*b.* 1839), equally well known as architect and etcher (member of the Society of British Artists and of the Painter-Etchers), was awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1896.]

[2] [The number of the *Architect* in which this letter was printed contained two sketches from Mr. George's "Etchings on the Mosel,"—those, viz., of the Elector's Palace, Coblentz, and of the interior of Metz Cathedral. The intention of the *Architect* to reproduce these etchings had apparently been previously communicated to Ruskin, who wrote the present letter for the issue in which the etchings were to be given. Mr. George has since published other works of the same kind—*e.g.*, "Etchings in Belgium," "Etchings on the Loire" (see Ruskin's advice to him at the end of this letter, p 338).]

[3] [The reference is to *Ariadne Florentina: Six Lectures on Wood and Metal Engraving given before the University of Oxford, Michaelmas Term, 1872*, and afterwards published, 1873–1876. The lectures given in the year 1873 were upon Tuscan Art, afterwards published as *Val d'Arno*.]



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indicates an intense perception of points of character in architecture, and a sincere enjoyment of them for their own sake. His drawings are not accumulative of material for future use; still less are they vain exhibitions of his own skill. He draws the scene in all its true relations, because it delights him, and he perceives what is permanently and altogether characteristic in it. As opposed to such frank and joyful work, most modern architectural drawings are mere diagram or exercise.

I call them precious, in the second place, because they show very great powers of true composition. All their subjects are made delightful more by skill of arrangement than by any dexterities of execution; and this faculty is very rare amongst landscape painters and architects, because nearly every man who has any glimmering of it naturally takes to figure painting—not that the ambition to paint figures is any sign of the faculty, but that, when people have the faculty, they nearly always have also the ambition. And, indeed, this is quite right, if they would not forsake their architecture afterwards, but apply their power of figure design, when gained, to the decoration of their buildings.

To return to Mr. George's work. It is precious, lastly, in its fine sense of serene light and shade, as opposed to the coruscations and horrors of modern attempts in that direction. But it is a pity—and this is the first grand principle of etching which I feel it necessary to affirm—when the instinct of chiaroscuro leads the artist to spend time in producing texture on his plate which cannot be ultimately perfect, however laboured. All the common raptures concerning blots, burr, delicate biting, and the other tricks of the etching trade, merely indicate imperfect feeling for shadow.

The proper instrument of chiaroscuro is the brush; a wash of sepia, rightly managed, will do more in ten minutes than Rembrandt himself could do in ten days of the most ingenious scratching, or blurt out by the most happy

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mixtures of art and accident.* As soon as Mr. George has learned what true light and shade is, (and a few careful studies with brush or chalk would enable him to do so,) he will not labour his etched subjects in vain. The virtue of an etching, in this respect, is to express perfectly harmonious sense of light and shade, but not to realize it. All fine etchings are done with few lines.[1]

Secondly,—and this is a still more important general principle, (I must let myself fall into dictatorial terms for brevity's sake)—Let your few lines be sternly clear, however delicate, or however dark. All burr and botch is child's play, and a true draughtsman must never be at the mercy of his copper and ink. Drive your line well and fairly home; don't scrawl or zigzag; know where your hand is going, and what it is doing, to a hair's-breadth; then bite clear and clean, and let the last impression be as good as the first. When it begins to fail, break your plate.

Third general principle.

Don't depend much on various biting. For a true master, and a great purpose, even one biting is enough. By no flux or dilution of acid can you ever etch a curl of hair or a cloud; and if you think you can etch the gradations of coarser things, it is only because you have never seen them. Try, at your leisure, to etch a teacup or a tallow candle, of their real size; see what you can make of the gradations of those familiar articles; if you succeed to your mind, you may try something more difficult afterwards.

Lastly. For all definite shades of architectural detail, use pencil or charcoal, or the brush, never the pen point. You can draw a leaf surface rightly in a minute or two

* The value of Rembrandt's etchings is always in the inverse ratio of the labour bestowed on them after his first thoughts have been decisively expressed; and even the best of his chiaroscuros (the spotted shell, for instance [2]), are mere child's play compared to the disciplined light and shade of Italian masters.

[1] [For another discussion of etching, see *The Cestus of Aglaia*, §§ 56 *seq.*]

[2] [For other references to this plate, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 303), and *A Joy for Ever*, § 164.]



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with these,—with the pen point, never, to all eternity. And on your knowing what the surface of a form is depends your entire power of recognizing good work. The difference between thirteenth-century work, wholly beautiful, and a cheap imitation of it, wholly damnable, lies in gradation of surface as subtle as those of a rose-leaf, and which are, to modern sculpture, what singing is to a steam-whistle.

For the rest, the limitation of etched work to few lines enables the sketcher to multiply his subjects, and make his time infinitely more useful to himself and others. I would most humbly solicit, in conclusion, such advantageous use of his gifts from Mr. George. He might etch a little summer tour for us every year, and give permanent and exquisite record of a score of scenes, rich in historical interest, with no more pains than he has spent on one or two of these plates in drawing the dark sides of a wall.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN RUSKIN.

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5

## THE FREDERICK WALKER EXHIBITION

[1876]

### I

1. DEAR MR. MARKS,[1]—You ask me to say what I feel of Frederick Walker's work, now seen in some collective mass, as far as anything can be seen in black-veiled London. You have long known my admiration of his genius, my delight in many passages of his art. These, while he lived, were all I cared to express.[2] If you will have me speak of him now, I must speak the whole truth of what I feel—namely, that every soul in London interested in art ought to go to see that Exhibition, and, amid all the beauty and the sadness of it, very diligently to try and examine themselves as to the share they have had, in their own busy modern life, in arresting the power of this man at the point where it stayed. Very chief share they have had, assuredly. But he himself, in the liberal and radical temper of modern youth, has had his own part in casting down his strength,

[1] [This letter was written to H. Stacy Marks, R.A., in answer to a request that Ruskin would in some way record his impression of the Frederick Walker Exhibition, then open to the public. Frederick Walker died in June 1875, at the early age of thirty-five, only four years after having been elected an Associate of the Royal Academy. Marks sent the letter for publication to the *Times*, where it appeared on January 20, 1876. It was reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. pp. 170–178, and again by Marks in his *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, 1894, vol. i. pp. 95–102. Marks' text, as compared with the *Times* and *Arrows*, shows a few minor variations, which have here been adopted. Thus in § 1, line 7, *Arrows* reads "will" for "must"; § 4, line 5, omits "who" before "ate"; § 5, line 8, reads "manor-house" for "manor-houses"; § 8, line 1, *Arrows* (reprinting the *Times*) reads "Fishmonger's Stalls" (952); Marks, "Fishmonger's Stall" (62); line 17, reads "and" for "but." The paragraphs are now numbered for convenience of reference.]

[2] [Ruskin, it seems, had talked in this sense; he had not published anything about Walker until the present letter.]



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following wantonly or obstinately his own fancies wherever they led him.

2. For instance, it being Nature's opinion that sky should usually be blue, and it being Mr. Walker's opinion that it should be the colour of buff plaster, he resolutely makes it so, for his own isolated satisfaction, partly in affectation also, buff skies being considered by the public more sentimental than blue ones. Again, the laws of all good painting having been long ago determined by absolute masters, whose work cannot be bettered nor departed from —Titian having determined for ever what oil-painting is, Angelico what tempera-painting is, Perugino what fresco-painting is, two hundred years of noble miniature-painting what minutest work on ivory is, and, in modern times, a score of entirely skilful and disciplined draughtsmen what pure water-colour and pure body-colour painting on paper are, (Turner's Yorkshire drawing of Hornby Castle, now at Kensington, and John Lewis's "Encampment under Sinai,"[1] being nameable at once as unsurpassable standards); here is Mr. Walker refusing to learn anything from any of those schools or masters, but inventing a semi-miniature, quarter fresco, quarter wash manner of his own—exquisitely clever, and reaching, under such clever management, delightfullest results here and there, but which betrays his genius into perpetual experiment instead of achievement, and his life into woful vacillation between the good, old, quiet room of the Water-Colour Society, and your labyrinthine magnificence at Burlington House.

3. Lastly, and in worst error, the libraries of England being full of true and noble books—her annals of true and noble history, and her traditions of beautiful and noble—in these scientific times I must say, I suppose, "mythology" —not religion—from all these elements of mental education

[1] [The "Hornby Castle" was executed, together with the rest of the "great Yorkshire series," for Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire* (Longman, 1823). It was included in the Sheepshanks gift to the South Kensington Museum: for another reference to it, see Vol. XIII. p. 590. The picture of John Lewis here alluded to is described in Ruskin's *Academy Notes*, 1856, No. II.: see above, p. 73.]

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and subjects of serviceable art, he turns recklessly away to enrich the advertisements of the circulating library, to sketch whatever pleases his fancy, barefooted, or in dainty boots, of modern beggary and fashion, and enforce, with laboriously symbolical pathos, his adherence to Justice Shallow's sublime theology that "all shall die."[1]

4. That theology has indeed been preached by stronger men, again and again, from Horace's days to our own, but never to so little purpose. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,"[2] said wisely in his way the Latin farmer, who ate his beans and bacon in comfort, had his suppers of the gods on the fair earth, with his servants jesting round the table, and left eternal monuments of earthly wisdom and of cricket-song. "Let us labour and be just, for to-morrow we die, and after death the Judgment," said Holbein and Dürer, and left eternal monuments of upright human toil and honourable gloom of godly fear. "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, for to-morrow we die, and shall be with God," said Angelico and Giotto, and left eternal monuments of divinely-blazoned heraldry of Heaven. "Let us smoke pipes, make money, read bad novels, walk in bad air, and say sentimentally how sick we are in the afternoon, for to-morrow we die, and shall be made ourselves clay pipes," says the modern world, and drags this poor bright painter down into the abyss with it, vainly clutching at a handful or two of scent and flowers in the May gardens.

5. Under which sorrowful terms, being told also by your grand Academicians that he should paint the nude, and, accordingly, wasting a year or two of his life in trying to paint schoolboys' backs and legs without their shirts or breeches, and with such other magazine material as he can pick up of sick gipsies, faded gentlewomen, pretty girls disguised as paupers, and the red-roofed or grey remnants of old English villages and manor-houses, last wrecks of the

[1] [*2 Henry IV.*, Act iii. sc. 2.]
[2] [1 Corinthians xv. 32. For one of Horace's frequent expressions of the sentiment, see *Odes*, i. 11, 6.]

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country's peace and honour, remaining yet visible among the black ravages of its ruin, he supplies the demands of his temporary public, scarcely patient, even now that he has gone, to pause beside his delicate tulips or under his sharp-leaved willows, and repent for the passing tints and fallen petals of the life that might have been so precious, and, perhaps, in better days, prolonged.

6. That is the main moral of the Exhibition. Of the beauty of the drawings, accepting them for what they aim at being, there is little need that I should add anything to what has been already said rightly by the chief organs of the London Press. Nothing can go beyond them in subtlety of exhibited touch (to be distinguished, however, observe always, from the serene completion of master's work, disdaining the applause to be gained by its manifestation); their harmonies of amber-colour and purple are full of exquisite beauty in their chosen key; their composition always graceful, often admirable, and the sympathy they express with all conditions of human life most kind and true; not without power of rendering character which would have been more recognized in an inferior artist, because it would have been less restrained by the love of beauty.

7. I might, perhaps, in my days of youth and good fortune, have written what the public would have called "eloquent passages" on the subjects of the Almshouse and the Old Gate;[1] being now myself old and decrepit, (besides

[1] [The following are the pictures, as catalogued, enumerated in the order in which they are mentioned here :—

1. "The Almshouse"—No. 52—called "The House of Refuge." Oil on canvas. A garden and terrace in quadrangle of almshouses; on left an old woman and girl; on right a mower cutting grass. Exhibited R.A. 1872. (Now in the Tate Gallery, No. 1391.)

2. "The Old Gate"—No. 48—oil on canvas. Lady in black and servant with basket coming through the gate of old mansion; four children at play at foot of steps; two villagers and dog in foreground. Exhibited R.A. 1869.

3. "The Cottage Gardens"—No. 71, "The Spring of Life." Water-colour. Lady in a garden with two children and a lamb; a cherry tree in blossom. Exhibited at the Water-Colour Society, Winter 1866–1867.

4. "Ladies and Lilies"—No. 37, "A Lady in a Garden, Perthshire." Water-colour. A lady seated on a knoll on which is a sun-dial; grey-hound on left; background, old manor-house. No. 67, "Lilies." Water-colour. Lady in a

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being much bothered with beggars, and in perpetual feud with parish officers,) and having seen every building I cared for in the world ruined, I pass these two pictures somewhat hastily by, and try to enjoy myself a little in the cottage gardens. Only one of them, however,—No. 71—has right sunshine in it, and that is a sort of walled paddock where I begin directly to feel uncomfortable about the lamb, lest, perchance, some front shop in the cottages belong to a butcher. If only it and I could get away to a bit of thymy hillside, we should be so much happier, leaving the luminous—perhaps too ideally luminous—child to adorn the pathetic paddock. I am too shy to speak to either of those two beautiful ladies among the lilies (37, 67), and take refuge among the shy children before the "Chaplain's Daughter" (20)—delightfullest, it seems to me, of the minor designs, and a piece of most true and wise satire. The sketches of the "Daughter of Heth" go far to tempt me to read the novel;[1] and, ashamed of this weakness, I

garden watering flowers, chiefly lilies. Exhibited at the Water-Colour Society, Winter 1869–1870 and 1868–1869 respectively.

5. "The Chaplain's Daughter," No. 20, subject from Miss Thackeray's "Jack the Giant-killer." Exhibited at the Water-Colour Society, Summer 1868.

6. "Daughter of Heth," by W. Black. No. 37. "Do ye no ken this is the Sabbath?" Young lady at piano; servant enters hurriedly. (Study in black and white, executed in 1872.)—[See the novel, vol. i. p. 41. "'Preserve us a', lassie, do ye ken what ye're doing? Do ye no ken that this is the Sabbath, and that you're in a respectable house?' The girl turned round with more wonder than alarm in her face: 'Is it not right to play music on Sunday?'"]—(No. 131. Three more studies for the same novel.)

7. "The Old Farm Garden"—No. 33—Water-colour. A girl, with cat on lawn, knitting; garden path bordered by tulips; farm buildings in background. Painted in 1871.

8. "Salmon-fishers"—No. 47—"Fisherman and Boy"—Water-colour. Keeper and boy on bank of river. Glen Spean. Salmon in foreground. Exhibited at the Water-Colour Society, Summer 1867.

9. Mushrooms and Fungi—No. 41—Water-colour. Painted in 1873.

10. "Fishmonger's Stalls"—Nos. 9 and 62 (not 952)—viz., No. 9, "A Fishmonger's Shop." Water-colour. Painted in 1873; and No. 62, also "A Fishmonger's Shop." Water-colour. Fishmonger selling fish; lady and boy in costumes of about 1800. Exhibited at Water-Colour Society, Winter 1872–1873.

11. No. 68. "The Ferry." Water-colour. Sight size, $11\frac{1}{4} \times 18$ in. A ferry boat, in which are two figures, a boatman and a lady, approaching a landing-place; on the bank figures of villagers, and children feeding swans. Exhibited at Water-Colour Society, Winter 1870–1871.]

[1] [A little later Ruskin read another book by Black—*The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton*—and greatly admired it: see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 87.]

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retreat resolutely to the side of the exemplary young girl knitting in the "Old Farm Garden" (88), and would instantly pick up her ball of worsted for her, but that I wouldn't for the world disappoint the cat. No drawing in the room is more delicately completed than this unpretending subject, and the flower-painting in it, for instantaneous grace of creative touch, cannot be rivalled; it is worth all the Dutch flower-pieces in the world.

8. Much instructed, and more humiliated, by passage after passage of its rapidly-grouped colour, I get finally away into the comfortable corner beside the salmon-fishers and the mushrooms; and the last-named drawing, despise me who may, keeps me till I've no more time to stay, for it entirely beats my dear old William Hunt in the simplicity of its execution, and rivals him in the subtlest truth.

I say nothing of the "Fishmonger's Stalls" (9 and 62), though there are qualities of the same kind in these also, for they somewhat provoke me by their waste of time—the labour spent on one of them would have painted twenty instructive studies of fish of their real size. And it is well for artists in general to observe that when they do condescend to paint still life carefully—whether fruit, fungi or fish—it must at least be of the real size. The portrait of a man or woman is only justifiably made small that it may be portable, but nobody wants to carry about the miniature of a cod; and if the reader will waste five minutes of his season in London in the National Gallery, he may see in the hand of Perugino's Tobias a fish worth all these on the boards together.[1]

9. Some blame of the same kind attaches to the marvellous drawing No. 68. It is all very well for a young artist to show how much work he can put into an inch, but very painful for an old gentleman of fifty-seven to have to make out all the groups through a magnifying glass. I could say something malicious about the boat, in consequence of the effect of this exertion on my temper, but will

[1] [No. 288. For other references to the picture, see Vol. XIII. p. 173 *n.*]

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not, and leave with unqualified praise the remainder of the lesser drawings to the attention which each will variously reward.

10. Nor, in what I have already, it may be thought, too bluntly said, ought the friends of the noble artist to feel that I am unkind. It is because I know his real power more deeply than any of the admirers who give him indiscriminate applause, that I think it right distinctly to mark the causes which prevented his reaching heights they did not conceive, and ended by placing one more tablet in the street of tombs, which the passionate folly and uninstructed confusion of modern English society prolong into dark perspective above the graves of its youth.

I am, dear Marks, always very faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

II

HERNE HILL,
19*th January* 1876.[1]

11. DEAR MR. MARKS,—I am grateful to you for sending the letter as it stood, and trust that it may be as useful, in practical recommendation of the exhibition, as if it had been all friendly or laudatory. I do not wonder it disappointed you—it disappointed *me*—for I never know

[1] [To the letter printed above, Marks replied as follows:—

"15 HAMILTON TERRACE, N.W.,
"*January* 18, 1876.

"MY DEAR MR. RUSKIN,—I sent your manuscript to the *Times* early this morning, so perhaps we may see it in print to-morrow.

"If I also may speak 'the whole truth,' I would say that I read your notes with a feeling of disappointment. I had hoped that he who praised Frère so highly, finding in him 'the grace of Reynolds and the purity of Angelico' (I quote from memory), and who told us that 'if we are now to do anything great, good, or religious, it must be got out of our own little island, railroads and all' [*Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 231)]—I had hoped, I say, that he who told us this would have found more to admire in the works of one so essentially English, and who has given us so many pure and exquisite renderings of childhood and womanhood. It may be that my friendship for the man has led me to overrate the painter, but I have been in company with his collected works some days while assisting to hang them, and they

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what is in my head, now, till I look for it. But do not think it argues change of temper since I wrote the Frère review, or a wanton praise of one man and blame of another. Every syllable of my criticism, these last twenty years, is weighed like apothecaries' drugs, whether it be prussic acid (which I can't ever distil to the bitterness I want), or perfumery of the Rimmel-smoothest.[1] You all of you think I know nothing of my trade, pick out what you like, and say, "Well, for Ruskin, that's not so bad," and "What a fool that fellow is!" when it's what you don't agree with—and of course, that way, you never really understand a word I say.

12. I wrote of Frère, first, he had the "simplicity of Wordsworth."[2] Well, he lived in a village, loved it, and painted what he saw there. (Hook[3] has done something of the kind, though not so faithfully, for Clovelly.) But you don't suppose there's any "simplicity" in Walker! All those peasants of his are got up for the stage. Look at the flutter of that girl's apron under the apple-tree; look at the ridiculous mower, galvanised-Elgin in his attitude (and the sweep of the scythe utterly out of drawing, by the way). You don't suppose that flock of geese is done

grew upon me hourly, impressing more forcibly than ever the opinion I had long entertained that Walker was one of our greatest artists.

"And now, having said my say, I hope you will believe that I write this, not angrily, but sadly; and though I would have wished you could praise Walker more, I am not the less grateful to you for what you have said, and for the kind promptitude with which you have said it. Believe me to be, very faithfully yours,

"H. S. M."

In rejoinder, Ruskin sent the letter printed above; it is here reprinted from *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, by Henry Stacy Marks, R.A., 1894, vol. i. pp. 103–106. Marks in a further letter (*ibid.*, pp. 106–107) thanked Ruskin for the service which his *critique* in the *Times* had rendered to the Exhibition: "It cannot fail to draw many visitors. . . . In fact, I heard of people being in the gallery on Thursday afternoon with the letter cut from the paper, and alternately studying the words and the pictures."]

[1] [The allusion is to Eugène Rimmel, proprietor of well-known perfumery establishments in London and Paris, and author of *The Book of Perfumes* (1865).]

[2] [*i.e.*, in *Academy Notes* for 1857: see above, p. 142.]

[3] [See above, p. 9. "It was in 1854 Hook may be said to have discovered Clovelly by going there at the recommendation of Mr. Cope, R.A., and before the publication, in 1855, of Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* which directed all the world's eyes to the little cleft in the coast which looks upon the western sea and Lundy, a place for ever associated with our painter's name" (*James Clarke Hook*, by F. G. Stephens, p. 18).]

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simply? It is elaborately affected—straining to express the feelings of a cockney who had never before seen a goose in his life, web-footed. You don't suppose those children in the "Chaplain's Daughter" are simple? They are as artificial as the Sistine Chapel, and *yet* he can't be content with them, but must put in his little fashionable wretch, to mix another flavour with them—and that a nasty one.

18. Again, I said of Frère, "He has the grace of Reynolds." At the time I wrote (he has much declined since) the masterful facility and serenity of Frère's broad touch were no less inimitable than Reynolds' was. Walker's, with all its skill, is an agony of labour. Look at the rose in the breast of Circe in the Old Masters;[1] it is worth all Walker's flower-beds in a row; and that was Frère's method of work when I wrote that review.

14. Lastly, I said he had "the holiness of Angelico." The picture I was speaking of, "The Prayer," is an entirely immortal work in representing the sacredest moment in the day of a peasant mother and child. But there is no evidence in the entire Walker exhibition that he ever had heard of such a thing as prayer. He seems to be one of your modern clique of Sons of Heth, who don't even know the religion of the Hittites.[2]

15. And lastly, you all of you fancy, I suppose, that I write heartlessly, and don't consider how dear and good and pleasant people were. But what business have you to mix up your hearts and brains in a mess? It is not because my affections are weak, but because they are much too strong to be mistaken for anything else, that I can keep clear of them—when their conversation is not wanted.

And I must not close my letter without asking you

[1] ["Portrait of Mrs. Nisbett as Circe," by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Painted in 1781 for the Earl of Bristol, and given by him to Sir John Stanley, Bart. Exhibited at the Old Masters Exhibition, 1876, by the Dowager Lady Stanley of Alderley.]

[2] [The allusion to the Sons of Heth (that is, the Hittites) was suggested by Walker's drawing "Daughter of Heth" (p. 343). Ruskin uses the term as of those who are aliens to the commonwealth of Israel (Genesis xxvii. 46—a verse which was the motto of Black's novel), yet are not downright enemies, nor evilly disposed (see Genesis xxiii.).]

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to believe that it is owing to what I know of your own kindness of heart that I take these pains to justify myself to you for what I have written; for although for the moment it may give you more pain that I should thus further insist on the failings of your friend's work, I trust you will ultimately have more contentment in knowing that I cared for you both, and wrote with extreme earnestness and deliberation, than in remaining under any impression of having merely drawn me into an ebullition of momentary ill-temper. And I trust that you will kindly accept the expression of my friendly feeling to yourself, and continue to think of me as faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

H. STACY MARKS, ESQ.

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## 6

## ARTHUR BURGESS[1]

[1887]

1. I do not know how many years ago, but sadly many, came among the morning letters to Denmark Hill, one containing a richly-wrought dark woodcut,—of—I could not make out exactly what,—and don't remember now what it turned out to be,—but it was by a fine workman's attentive mind and hand, that much was certain; and with it was a little note, to this effect, in words, if not these following, at least as modest and simple: "I can cut wood like this, and am overworked, and cannot make my living,—can you help me?—Arthur Burgess."

I answered by return post, asking him to come and see me.

The grave face, honest but reserved, distressed but unconquerable, vivid yet hopeless, with the high, full, forward, but strainedly narrow forehead, impressed me as much as a face ever did, but extremely embarrassed me, inexplicable as the woodcut; but certainly full of good in its vague way. After some talk, I found that though he had original faculty, it had no special direction, nor any yet well struck root; he had been variously bound, embittered, and wounded in the ugly prison-house of London labour—done with all the strength of nerve in him, and with no help from his own heart or any one else's. I saw the first things he needed were rest, and a little sympathy and field for his manual

[1] [This paper appeared (with the plates here given) in *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, 1887, vol. ii. pp. 46–53. It has not heretofore been reprinted; the numbering of the paragraphs is here introduced. For Burgess, see also Introduction, p. xxxii. The woodcut inserted on p. 350 was done by Burgess for Ruskin from an illuminated manuscript.]



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skill. It chanced that I was much set on botanical work at the time, so I asked him to come up in the forenoons, and make drawings from my old-fashioned botanical books, or from real flowers, such as he would have pleasure in engraving, for *Proserpina*.

2. And soon we got into a quiet and prosperous way of work together: but there was always reserve on his side—always puzzlement on mine. I did not like enslaving him to botanical woodcut, nor was I myself so set on floral study as to make it a sure line of life for him. Other chances and fancies interfered, dolorously, with the peace of those summers, between 1860 and 1870,—they were when I had finished *Modern Painters*, and saw it was not of the least use:[1] while the reception of the more serious thought I had given to *Munera Pulveris* angered and paralysed me, so that I had no good spirit to guide my poor friend with. In 1867 the first warning mischief to my own health showed itself, giddiness and mistiness of head and eyes, which stopped alike my drawing and thinking to any good purpose.[2] I went down into Cumberland

[1] [A despondent view expressed by Ruskin in 1869 in his lecture on "The Mystery of Life and its Arts" (*Sesame and Lilies*, §§ 101, 102). Details of the biographical facts and feelings, here alluded to, will be found in the Introductions to later volumes.]

[2] [For the illness of 1867, see Introduction to the volume containing *Time and Tide*.]

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and walked and rowed till I was well again, but don't know what poor Burgess did, except that — so far as I know—he would not have fallen into extreme distress without telling me. In 1869, after much vacillation and loss of impetus, I went to Verona to study the Scala Tombs, and took Arthur with me.[1] Partly by his own good instincts and power, partly, I am vain enough to think, under my teaching, he had become by that time such a draughtsman in black and white as I never knew the match of, with gifts of mechanical ingenuity and mathematical intelligence in the highest degree precious to me. If he had been quite happy in his work, and I quite resolute in mine, and we had settled ourselves to do Verona—Padua—Parma—together, there had been good news of us—there and elsewhere.

3. "Dis aliter?"[2]—by no means; "Dæmonibus aliter"—I should once have said; but my dear friend Henry Willett[3] declares there is no Devil,—and I am myself of the same mind so far at least as to be angry with myself instead of Him:—and sorry only for the want of Vision in my own mind, not in the least reproaching the Vision of Fate. Arthur did everything I wanted of him at Verona in perfectness. He drew the mouldings of the Scala Tombs as never architecture had been drawn before; he collated and corrected my measurements; he climbed where I could not; and at last made a model in clay of every separate stone in the Castelbarco Tomb,[4] showing that without any cement the whole fabric stood on its four pillars with entire security, —the iron binding bars above the capitals being needful only as security against vibration. But all this he did without joy, with beautiful fidelity and pride in doing well, but not seeing what the work might come to, or perhaps too wisely foreseeing that it could come to nothing. At last—

[1] [Several of the drawings made by Burgess on this visit were shown at the Royal Institution in 1870, to illustrate Ruskin's lecture on *Verona and its Rivers*.]

[2] [Virgil, *Æn.* ii. 428.]

[3] [Mr. Henry Willett, of Arnold House, Brighton, a collector of works by Turner and Ruskin. For references to him, see *Two Paths* (preface of 1878); *Ethics of the Dust* (preface to ed. 2); and *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 64, 85, 86.]

[4] [See Vol. IX. p. 176.]

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on an excursion to Venice—his small room opening on a stagnant canal, he fell into a fit of delirious fever, through which my servant, Frederick Crawley,[1] nursed him bravely, and brought him back to me, but then glad to be sent home. For the rest, I had received at Verona the offer of the Slade Professorship—and foolishly accepted it. My simple duty at that time was to have stayed with my widowed mother at Denmark Hill, doing whatever my hand found to do there. Mixed vanity, hope of wider usefulness, and partly her pleasure in my being at Oxford again, took me away from her, and from myself.

4. Mr. Burgess came down sometimes to Oxford to help me in diagram and other drawing, and formed his own circle of friends there;—I am thankful to associate with the expression of my own imperfect, blind, and unserviceable affection, that of the deeper feeling of one[2] who cared for him to the end.

"I remember well the first time that I met Arthur Burgess, one evening at a man's rooms in Queen's. He asked me to breakfast with him, I think it was the next morning, at the Roebuck. I not only breakfasted with him, we spent the whole day together; we went out for a long walk, talking of Art, of Religion, of all manner of things. Immediately and immensely I was attracted by him, attracted by his width of view, his serious feeling, his quick humour, which was abounding, attracted perhaps above all by his generous acceptance of me; but I little guessed that on that day had begun one of the most valuable, and the closest, and the dearest friendships, that I shall ever know.

"After I had left Oxford we came gradually to see one another very often: as the years went by our intimate relationship increased. We entered into one another's lives, if I may so say, absolutely. There was not a care, an expectation, a work, an interest of any kind of importance, which we did not share. We trusted one another so thoroughly that I am sure there was nothing about myself that I cared to hide from him, and I believe that there was little about him that he hid from me. And therefore, when I am speaking of him, now that

[1] [For other references to Crawley, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 62 and 67.]
[2] [No doubt, Mr. Selwyn Image: see above, Introduction, p. xxxii.]

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he is gone, I feel that I am speaking from as sure a knowledge as ever one man can have of another. I do not wish, as he would not have wished me, to write a panegyric over him. He had great weaknesses, and great faults: he had powers so rare, and virtues so fine, that I am afraid it would sound merely exaggeration, if I said all the good that I knew of him. But some of the good I must say out. No man, I believe, ever breathed, whose spiritual and moral instincts were more delicate; whose devotion to his friends was more thorough and chivalrous; who more readily and on every occasion held his keen intelligence patiently and unreservedly at their service. He did foolish things, and, it may be, unworthy things: why should I hesitate to say what nobody was so ready to acknowledge as he was himself? But I will say this also without fear and without any reservation, that he was simply incapable of doing anything which had in it one grain of meanness. I have known him suffer the loss of a friendship, which was very dear to him, and endanger another, rather than break a promise of silence, which certainly under the circumstances most men of honour would have held him justified in breaking. His health for many years was bad, his circumstances were unavoidably hard, he was cursed or blessed, as you like to call it, with a self-torturing spirit of extreme subtlety, which probably no circumstances in the world could have saved him from the pains and dangers of. Yet, whenever a thing seemed to him a real duty, he carried it through and through. The pains he was ready to take over any work or any service were immense. No one ever went to him in trouble or for advice, but he gave them generously and cheerfully all that it was in his power to give them. Yet there was about him no suspicion of patronizing; and of the innumerable acts of kindness, small and great, which so many of us have received from him, no one would ever hear mention or hint from his own lips. I know that all this, that I am saying about my friend, is simply true. I loved him too dearly, and honoured him too highly, to care now about denying his faults, or about speaking of his splendid qualities with unbalanced emotion."

5. During the years when I was lecturing, or arranging the examples in my school, Mr. Burgess was engaged at fixed salary, executing either the woodcuts necessary to illustrate my lectures, or drawings to take permanent place in the school examples.[1] So far as I was able to continue *Proserpina*, the woodcuts were always executed by him:

[1] [See, in a later volume, the various catalogues of these.]



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and indeed I was wholly dependent on his assistance for the effectual illustrations of my most useful books. Especially those in *Ariadne Florentina* and *Aratra Pentelici* are unequalled, whether in precision of facsimile, or the legitimate use of the various methods of wood-engraving according to his own judgment. He never put name or initial to his work, trusting to my occasional acknowledgment of the relations between us,—heaven knows—not given grudgingly, but carelessly and insufficiently, as in the stray note at p. 72 of *Ariadne*—or sometimes with mere commendation of the engraving—as at p. 78 of *Aratra*, without giving his name.[1]

At that time I had entire confidence in my own power, and hope in his progressive skill, and expected that we should both of us go on together, doing better and better, or else that he would take up some line of separate work which would give him position independently of any praise of mine.

6. Failing myself in all that I attempted to do at Oxford I went into far away work, historical and other, at Assisi and in Venice, which certainly not in pride, but in the habit fixed in me from childhood of thinking out whatever I cared for silently, partly also now in states of sadness which I did not choose to show or express, was all done without companions, poor Arthur suffering more than I knew (though I ought to have known) in being thus neglected. The year '78 brought us together again once more;—he was several times at Brantwood: the last happy walk we had together was to the top of the crags of the south-west side of the village of Coniston. He was again in London after that, and found there and possessed himself of some of Blake's larger drawings—known to me many and many a year before.[2] George Richmond had shown

[1] [Ruskin's references were to the octavo edition of each book; see § 83 *n.* of *Ariadne* and § 80 of *Aratra*. For other acknowledgments of Burgess's help and skill, see *Ariadne*, § 133, and *Aratra*, Preface, § 22 *n.*, and § 130.]

[2] [For Ruskin's appreciation of Blake, see Vol. V. p. 138, Vol. VIII. p. 256.]

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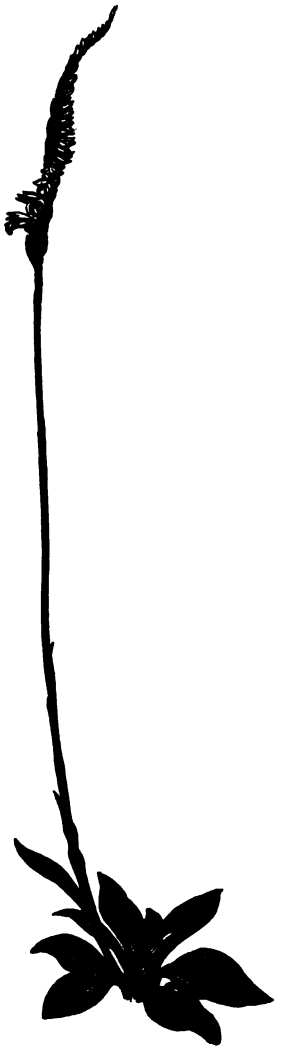

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them to me—with others—I suppose about 1840,—original studies for the illustrations to Young's *Night Thoughts*—and some connected with the more terrific subjects etched for the book of Job. I bought the whole series of them at once;—carried it home triumphantly—and made myself unhappy over it—and George Richmond again delivered me from thraldom of their possession.

They were the larger and more terrific of these which poor Arthur had now again fallen in with—especially the Nebuchadnezzar—and a wonderful witch with attendant owls and grandly hovering birds of night unknown to ornithology.

7. No one at the time was, so far as I know, aware of the symptoms of illness which had been haunting me for some days before, and I only verify their dates by diary entries,—imaginative, then beyond my wont, and proving that before the Blake drawings came, my thoughts were all wandering in their sorrowful direction,—with mingled coruscations of opposing fancy, too bright to last. As I have no intention of carrying *Præterita* beyond the year '75,—up to which time none of my powers, so far as I can judge, were anywise morbid,—I may say here, respecting the modes of overstrain which affected alike Arthur Burgess and myself in our later days, that our real work, and habits of consistent thought, were never the worse for them; that we always recognized dream for dream, and truth for truth; that Arthur's hand was as sure with the burin after his illness at Verona as in the perfect woodcuts of which examples are given with this paper; and that whatever visions came to me of other worlds higher or lower than this, I remained convinced that in all of them, two and two made four. Howbeit we never saw each other again, though Arthur was for some time employed for me at Rouen, in directing the photography for which I had obtained permission to erect scaffolding before the north gate of the west front of the cathedral:[1] and in spite of my own

[1] [This was in 1880.]

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repeated illnesses, I still hoped with his help to carry out the design of *Our Fathers have Told us*. But very certainly any farther effort in that direction is now impossible to me: the more that I perceive the new generation risen round us cares nothing about what its Fathers either did or said. In writing so much as this implies of my own epitaph with my friend's, I am thankful to say, securely for both of us, that we did what we could thoroughly, and that all we did together will remain trustworthy and useful—uncontradicted, and unbettered—till it is forgotten.

J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD,
*27th February*, 1887.

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## 7

# THE BLACK ARTS:

## A REVERIE IN THE STRAND[1]

[1887]

1. It must be three or four years now since I was in London, Christmas in the North country passing scarcely noted, with a white frost and a little bell-ringing, and I

[1] [This paper appeared in the *Magazine of Art*, January 1888, vol. xi. pp. 73–77. It was reprinted in *John Ruskin: a Sketch of his Life and Work and his Opinions, with Personal Recollections*, by M. H. Spielmann (Cassell & Co., 1900), pp. 192–202. Mr. Spielmann there gave an account of the circumstances in which the paper was written, together with extracts from letters by Ruskin on the subject. "In the autumn of 1887 (says Mr. Spielmann) Ruskin was in London staying at Morley's Hotel, Trafalgar Square; his window overlooked the National Gallery, 'where the Turners are,' he said markedly. . . . The editorship of the *Magazine of Art* had just been confided to me, and my announcement of it seemed to awaken his sympathetic pleasure. He clapped his hands and cried, 'Bravo! I'm so glad. You have a great opportunity now for good,' and immediately proposed to contribute an article to its pages. It was agreed that the paper in question should appear in the January number, and that it should be followed by at least one other. Then he went off to Sandgate to recuperate, whence he wrote: 'I find the landlord and his wife so nice and the rooms so comfortable that I've settled down (so far as I know) till Christmas. But please don't tell anybody where I am.' And a few days later:—

> 'When do you want your bit of "pleasant" writing? Did I say it would be pleasant? I have no confidence in that prospect. What I meant was that it wouldn't be deliberately *un*pleasant; and I will further promise it shall not be technical. But I fear it will be done mostly in grisaille. I don't feel up to putting any sparkle in—nor colour neither.'"

On another occasion, in offering advice about the *Magazine*, he wrote:—

> 'For one thing I shall strongly urge the publication of continuous series of things, good or bad. Half the dulness of all art books is their being really like specimen advertisement books, instead of complete accounts of anything. I have finished the introductory paper; six leaves like this, written as close. It will, perhaps, be shorter than you wished in print, but you will see it chats about a good many things, and I couldn't tack on the principal one to the tail of them; so that you had better begin your January number with Watts' more serious paper.'

"Then (continues Mr. Spielmann) came the article, but with no title to it; and as the



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don't know London any more, nor where I am in it—except the Strand. In which, walking up and down the other day, and meditating over its wonderful displays of etchings and engravings and photographs, all done to perfection such as I had never thought possible in my younger

press was waiting, a telegram was despatched to him to supply the omission." Ruskin replied :—

"I never compose by telegram, but call it 'The Black Arts,' if you like."

A subsequent letter of confirmation supplied as a substitute "A Reverie in the Strand"; and, while protesting against the telegram, which "'always makes me think somebody's dead,' he replied to a question of mine as to the amount owing to him for the article: 'you are indebted to me a penny a line; no more and no less. Of course, counted twopence through the double columns.'" The paper, here republished, was to have been followed by others, chiefly bearing on "body-colour Turners" as a contrast to the introductory matter, and on other matters as mentioned in the following letter :—

"19*th Jan.* '88.

"DEAR SPIELMANN,—I have mislaid a line I wrote to acknowledge cheque, and tell you what I meant to write next—I never *quite* know, till I begin—but I want to go on about pure composition—as far as I can without being tiresome—and there will be something about skies and trees, and I'll undertake that the drawings shall be representable and not cost much in representing. Ever faithfully yours,

"J. RUSKIN.

"M. H. SPIELMANN, Esq."

The further articles, however, were not written.

The paper was accompanied by three "process" reproductions of drawings by Ruskin—viz. (1) as head-piece, a sketch of Lucca, 1882; (2) in the text, on p. 75, "Mont Blanc de St. Gervais," said to be of the year "1832" but really much later (probably also 1882); and (3), occupying a full page (76), "The Cathedral Spire, Rouen," 1835: these drawings, having special connexion with the paper, are not here given with it; the third has already been reproduced (Vol. II., Plate 18, p. 400), "the spire" is really the Tour de Beurre, while the other two will be found in later volumes of the edition.

In the same number of the *Magazine of Art* (p. ix.) the following additional extracts were published from letters of Ruskin to the editor :—

"There ought to be a separate half-page of apology for the drawings of mine—in which the Rouen is a little too childish to show my proper early architectural power. All my really good drawings are too large, and most of them at Oxford."

"There is a very special interest, however (interposed the editor), attaching to the Rouen drawing, for it shows how strongly the influence of Prout was upon the draughtsman, then as now. 'Prout is one of the loves that always remain fresh to me,' he said to the writer a year or two ago." A copy of the preceding volume (1887) of the *Magazine of Art* had been sent by the editor to Ruskin. In acknowledging it, he wrote :—

"The really best thing in the book is Turner's 'Ulysses,' marvellously like the picture and a fine legitimate bit of woodwork. I may say further that very few of Turner's large oil subjects were engraved anything like so well, even in his own time."

This extract was printed in the *Academy* of November 12, 1887. The woodcut in question occupied p. 413, and was the work of O. Lacour.]

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days, it became an extremely searching and troublesome question with me what was to come of all this literally "black art," and how it was to influence the people of our great cities. For the first force of it—clearly in that field every one is doing his sable best: there is no scamped photography nor careless etching; and for second force, there is a quantity of living character in our big towns, especially in their girls, who have an energetic and business-like "know all about it" kind of prettiness which is widely independent of colour, and which, with the parallel business characters, engineering and financial, of the city squiredom, can be vividly set forth by the photograph and the schools of painting developed out of it; then for third force, there is the tourist curiosity and the scientific naturalism, which go round the world fetching big scenery home for us that we never had dreamed of: cliffs that look like the world split in two, and cataracts that look as if they fell from the moon, besides all kinds of antiquarian and architectural facts, which twenty lives could never have learned in the olden time. What is it all to come to? Are our lives in this kingdom of darkness to be indeed twenty times as wise and long as they were in the light?

2. The answer—what answer was possible to me—came chiefly in the form of fatigue, and a sorrowful longing for an old Prout washed in with Vandyke brown and British ink, or even a Harding forest scene with all the foliage done in zigzag.

And, indeed, for one thing, all this labour and realistic finishing makes us lose sight of the charm of easily-suggestive lines—nay, of the power of lines, properly so called, altogether.

There is a little book, and a very precious and pretty one, of Dr. John Brown's, called *Something about a Well.*[1]

[1] [*Something about a Well, with more of our Dogs.* By the late John Brown, M.D., author of *Rab and his Friends.* Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1882—a booklet of twenty-four pages in paper wrappers. For Ruskin's references to Dr. John Brown (1810–1882), see Vol. XII. p. xx., and compare Vol. X. p. lix.; *Fors Clavigera,* Letter 32; *Hortus Inclusus,* p. 9 (ed. 1902); and *Præterita,* ii. ch. xii. § 227. See also Vol. XIII. p. 400.]

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It has a yellow paper cover, and on the cover a careful woodcut from one of the Doctor's own pen-sketches: two wire-haired terriers begging, and carrying an old hat between them.

There is certainly not more than five minutes' work, if that, in the original sketch; but the quantity of dog-life in those two beasts—the hill-weather that they have roughed through together, the wild fidelity of their wistful hearts, the pitiful, irresistible mendicancy of their eyes and paws—fills me with new wonder and love every time the little book falls out of any of the cherished heaps in my study.

No one has pleaded more for finish than I in past time, or oftener,[1] or perhaps so strongly, asserted the first principle of Leonardo, that a good picture should look like a mirror of the thing itself.[2] But now that everybody can mirror the thing itself—at least the black and white of it—as easily as he takes his hat off, and then engrave the photograph, and steel the copper, and print piles and piles of the thing by steam, all as good as the first half-dozen proofs used to be, I begin to wish for a little less to look at, and would, for my own part, gladly exchange my tricks of stippling and tinting for the good Doctor's gift of drawing two wire-haired terriers with a wink.

3. And truly, putting all likings for old fashions out of the way, it remains certain that in a given time and with simple means, a man of imaginative power can do more and express more, and excite the fancy of the spectator more, by frank outline than by completed work; and that assuredly there ought to be in all our national art schools an outline class trained to express themselves vigorously and accurately in that manner. Were there no other reason for such lessoning, it is a sufficient one that there are modes of genius which become richly productive in that restricted

[1] [See, more especially, *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. ix. ("Of Finish"), and vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 21 *n.*, where that chapter is brought into relation with several passages on the subject in *Stones of Venice*.]

[2] [The passage from Leonardo's *Trattato della Pittura* is quoted, translated, and discussed in *Lectures on Art*, § 129.]

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manner; and yet by no training could be raised into the excellence of painting. Neither Bewick nor Cruikshank in England, nor Retsch, nor Ludwig Richter, in Germany,[1] could ever have become painters; their countrymen owe more to their unassuming instinct of invention than to the most exalted efforts of their historical schools.

4. But it must be noted, in passing, that the practice of outline in England, and I suppose partly in Continental academies also, has been both disgraced and arrested by the endeavour to elevate it into the rendering of ideal and heroic form, especially to the delineation of groups of statuary. Neither flesh nor sculptured marble can be outlined; and the endeavour to illustrate classical art and historical essays on it, by outlines of sculpture and architecture, has done the double harm of making outline common and dull, and preventing the public from learning that the merit of sculpture is in its surfaces, not its outlines.[2] The essential value of outline is in its power of suggesting quantity, intricacy, and character, in accessory detail, and in the richly-ornamented treatment which can be carried over large spaces which in a finished painting must be lost in shade.

5. But I have said in many places before now, though never with enough insistence, that schools of outline ought to be associated with the elementary practice of those entering on the study of colour.[3] Long before the patience or observation of children are capable of drawing in light and shade, they can appreciate the gaiety, and are refreshed by the interest of colour; and a very young child can be taught to wash it flatly, and confine it duly within limits. A little lady of nine years old coloured my whole volume of Guillim's heraldry[4] for me without one transgression or

[1] [For Ruskin on Bewick, see note in Vol. XIII. p. 435; on Cruikshank, Vol. VI. p. 471; on Retsch, Vol. IV. pp. 259 *n.*, 371; on Richter, Vol. XV. (*Elements of Drawing*, §§ 91, 239, 257).]

[2] [See also below, p. 436; and compare *Aratra Pentelici*, §§ 20, 22; *Val d'Arno*, § 286.]

[3] [See, for instance, "Lectures on Colour" (Vol. XII. pp. 482 *seq.*); and *Lectures on Landscape*, Lecture i. ("Outline"); and compare *Laws of Fésole*, ch. viii. ("Of the Relation of Colour to Outline").]

[4] [John Guillim (Rouge-Croix Pursuivant at Arms): *A Display of Heraldrie*, first published in 1610 and often re-issued.]

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blot; and there is no question but that the habit of even and accurately limited tinting is the proper foundation of noble water-colour art.

6. In the original plan of *Modern Painters*, under the head of "Ideas of Relation," I had planned an exact inquiry into the effects of colour-masses in juxtaposition; but found when I entered on it that there were no existing data in the note-books of painters from which any first principles could be deduced, and that the analysis of their unexplained work was far beyond my own power, the rather that the persons among my friends who had most definitely the gift of colour-arrangement were always least able to give any account of their own skill.

But, in its connection with the harmonies of music, the subject of the relations of pure colour is one of deep scientific and—I am sorry to use the alarming word, but there is no other—metaphysical interest; and without debate, the proper way of approaching it would be to give any young person, of evident colour-faculty, a series of interesting outline subjects to colour with a limited number of determined tints, and to watch with them the pleasantness, or dulness—a discord of the arrangements which, according to the nature of the subjects, might be induced in the colours.

7. It is to be further observed that although the skill now directed to the art of chromo-lithotint has achieved wonders in that mechanism, the perfection of illustrated work must always be in woodcut or engraving coloured by hand.[1] No stamped tint of water-colour can ever perfectly give the gradation to the sharp edge left by a well-laid touch of the pencil. And there can be no question (it has so long been my habit to assert things—at all events very questionable in the terms I choose for them—in mere love of provocation, that now in my subdued state of age and infirmity I take refuge, as often as possible, in the Unquestionable) that great advantage might be gained in the geography classes of primary schools by a system of

[1] [See on this subject, Vol. XIII. pp. 529–531.]

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bright colour adapted to *dissected* maps.[1] In the aforesaid condition of age and infirmity which I sometimes find it very difficult to amuse, I have been greatly helped by getting hold of a dissected map or two—four, to be accurate —Europe, France, England, and Scotland, and find it extremely instructive (though I am by way of knowing as much geography as most people) to put them together out of chance-thrown heaps when I am good for nothing else. I begin, for instance, in consequence of this exercise, to have some notion where Wiltshire is, and Montgomeryshire; and where the departments of Haute Loire and Haute Garonne are in France, and whereabouts St. Petersburg is in Russia. But the chief profit and pleasure of the business to me is in colouring the bits of counties for myself, to my own fancy, with nice creamy body-colour, which covers up all the names, leaves nothing but the shape to guess the county by (or colour when once determined), and opens the most entertaining debates of which will be the prettiest grouping of colours on the condition of each being perfectly isolated.

8. By this means, also, some unchangeable facts about each district may at once be taught, far more valuable than the reticulation of roads and rails with which all maps are now, as a matter of course, encumbered, and with which a child at its dissected map period has nothing to do. Thus, generally reserving purple for the primitive rock districts, scarlet for the volcanic, green for meadow-land, and yellow for corn-fields, one can still get in the warm or cold hues of each colour variety enough to separate districts politically—if not geologically distinct; one can keep a dismal grey for the coal countries, a darker green for woodland — the forests of Sherwood and Arden, for instance — and then giving rich gold to the ecclesiastical and royal domains, and painting the lakes and rivers with ultramarine, the map becomes a gay and pleasant bit of

[1] [For the educational importance attached by Ruskin to map-drawing, see *Love of Fésole*, ch. ix.]

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kaleidoscopic iridescence without any question of colour-harmonies. But for the sake of these, by a good composer in variegation, the geological facts might be ignored, and fixing first on *long-confirmed* political ones, as, for instance, on the blanche-rose colour and damask-rose for York and Lancaster, and the gold for Wells, Durham, Winchester, and Canterbury, the other colours might be placed as their musical relations required, and lessons of their harmonic nature and power, such as could in no other so simple method be enforced, made at once convincing and delightful.

9. I need not say, of course, that in manuscript illumination and in painted glass lessons of that kind are constant and of the deepest interest; but in manuscript the intricacy of design, and in glass the inherent quality of the material, are so great a part of the matter that the abstract relations of colour cannot be observed in their simplicity. I intended in the conclusion of this letter to proceed into some inquiry as to the powers of chromo-litho-tint; but the subject is completely distinct from that of colouring by hand, and I have been so much shaken in my former doubts of the capability of the process by the wonderful facsimiles of Turner vignettes, lately executed by Mr. Long,[1] from the collection in the subterranean domain of the National Gallery, that I must ask permission for farther study of these results before venturing on any debate of their probable range in the future.

J. RUSKIN.

SANDGATE, ST. MARTIN'S DAY, 1887.[2]

[1] [A series of chromo-lithographs much sold at the time as drawing copies.]
[2] [November 11. Ruskin was at Folkestone and Sandgate from September 1887 to February 1888.]

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# PART III

# NOTES

ON

# PROUT AND HUNT

(1879–1880)

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# NOTES BY MR. RUSKIN

ON

# SAMUEL PROUT

AND

# WILLIAM HUNT

ILLUSTRATED BY

A LOAN COLLECTION OF DRAWINGS

EXHIBITED AT THE

FINE ART SOCIETY'S GALLERIES

148 NEW BOND STREET

1879–1880

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[*Bibliographical Note.*—Of this Catalogue there are five editions:—

*First Edition* (1879–1880).—The title-page is as shown here on the preceding page. Octavo, pp. 108. The "Note" (here p. 371) on p. 3; Preface (here pp. 373–404), pp. 5–44; the Notes on Prout (here pp. 405–439), pp. 45–82; Notes on Hunt (here pp. 440–448), pp. 83–90; Appendices i.–iv., pp. 91–97. (These appendices, being extracts from Ruskin's books, are not here reprinted: see below, p. 448 *n.*). Catalogue of Drawings (here pp. 449–454), pp. 99–106; List of Contributors to the exhibition (here p. 454), pp. 107–108. The imprint at the foot of the last page reads—"London: Printed by Strangeways & Sons, Tower Street, Upper St. Martin's Lane." The headlines vary according to each division of the pamphlet. Issued in mottled grey paper wrappers, with the title-page (set slightly differently) repeated on the front cover, and with the following words added at the foot: "First Edition. Price 1s. 6d. | *N.B.*—Twenty-five per cent. of the Entrances to the Exhibition will be | divided among Art Charities." The variation in the setting of the title-page is as follows: "Notes by Mr. Ruskin | on | Samuel Prout and William Hunt." On p. 4 of the wrappers was an advertisement of the Illustrated Edition.

Some copies purporting to be of the First Edition are not in fact such. They are copies of the Second Edition, bound up in wrappers with the front cover set like the Second Edition, but bearing the words "First Edition."

*Second Edition* (1879–1880).—In this the setting of the title-page on the cover agrees with that on p. 1 of the book; the words "Second Thousand" being substituted for "First Edition." On pp. 99–106 the headline "Catalogue of Drawings" is changed to "Complete Index of Drawings"; and on pp. 45–90 "Catalogue," to "Notes on the Drawings." On p. 45 in ed. 1 the Catalogue began with the words:—

> "The reader will find, ending this pamphlet, a continuous index to the whole collection of drawings, with references to the pages in which special notice has been taken of them."

The references, however, were omitted in ed. 1. They were supplied in the second and later editions, but the words of the above sentence after "drawings" were cancelled; the references have been restored in this edition. The No. of a drawing left blank in a footnote on p. 7 (here p. 374) was filled up in ed. 2 as No. 132. The note on p. 48 (here p. 408) in ed. 1—"It was exhibited last year, but if it comes from Scotland, will be shown again," etc.—was altered as here, the drawing having in the meanwhile arrived. On p. 67 (here p. 425) the words "And in the great drawing . . . old times only" were transferred from the footnote to the text; this caused some difference in the setting of the five following pages. On p. 71 (here p. 429) the amount of money was filled in; in ed. 1 it appeared as "£ s. d." In the index fifty-one of the drawings, against which (in ed. 1) Ruskin's name appeared as the contributor, were now said to be contributed by Mr. S. G. Prout (49) and Mr. E. Quaile (2). Nos. 179–182 were added to the Catalogue of Drawings on p. 106 (here p. 454).

*Third Edition* (1879–1880).—For the most part a reprint of ed. 2. "Third Thousand" was substituted on the cover, and Nos. 183 and 184 were added to the list of drawings on p. 106 (here p. 454).

*Fourth Edition* (1879–1880).—Again a reprint, "Fourth Thousand" being substituted on the cover. In a portion of the edition, on p. 3 of the wrapper, was an advertisement of a proposed etching by Mr. Herkomer, A.R.A., of his portrait of Ruskin, which was then on exhibition at the Fine Art Society's Galleries.



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*Fifth (Illustrated) Edition* (1880).—The title-page is :—

Notes by Mr. Ruskin | on | Samuel Prout | and | William Hunt, | in illustration of | a Loan Collection of Drawings | exhibited at | The Fine Art Society's Galleries, | In 1879–1880. | Illustrated with Twenty Autotypes. | London: | The Fine Art Society, Limited, | 148 New Bond Street, | 1880.

Demy-quarto, pp. 95. On the reverse of the title-page is the imprint—"London: Printed by Strangeways & Sons, Tower Street, Upper St. Martin's Lane, W.C." On p. 3 is the following "Note" on the illustrated edition :—

"The success which attended the Illustrated Edition of Mr. Ruskin's Notes on his Turner Drawings has induced the Fine Art Society again to ask his consent to the issue of a similar edition of those compiled by him on Samuel Prout and William Hunt.

"This consent he has given, and the more readily, because the means of reproduction adopted in the present instance are more satisfactory than those used in the former volume. More satisfactory for these reasons—first, that the reproductions are taken directly from the originals, instead of from engravings after the originals; second, that the majority of the drawings now reproduced lend themselves more readily to the process. On this account, too, the drawings of Prout have been reproduced in fifteen instances, whilst of the Hunts only five have been selected.

"Subscribers to the Illustrated Edition of the Turner Notes will, it is trusted, forgive the want of uniformity in size between the two volumes, it being found that the larger sheet now used shows to much greater advantage the delicate pencillings of Mr. Prout."

List of Reproductions, p. 5, as follows :—

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Portrait of Samuel Prout. *By William Hunt* | *to face* 38 | 11. The Drachenfels | *to face* 52 |
| 2. Calais | ,, 40 | 12. Como | ,, 32 |
| 3. Abbeville—Church of St. Wulfran | ,, 30 | 13. Venice | ,, 54 |
| 4. Amiens | ,, 28 | 14. The Coliseum | ,, 34 |
| 5. Evreux | ,, 42 | 15. Domo d'Ossola | ,, 60 |
| 6. Strasburg | ,, 44 | 16. Bologna—San Giacomo | ,, 34 |
| 7. Old Street in Lisieux | ,, 46 | 17. The Dead Dove | ,, 69 |
| 8. Ghent | ,, 48 | 18. The Invalid | ,, 72 |
| 9. Antwerp | ,, 50 | 19. The Shy Sitter | *Frontispiece* |
| 10. Prague—Entrance over the Bridge | ,, 62 | 20. Hawthorn and Bird's Nest | *to face* 79 |

Contents, p. 7; Preface, pp. 9–38; Text of Notes, pp. 39–91; Advertisements, pp. 93–95. Issued in half Roxburgh, cloth sides, top edge gilt, printed on hand-made paper. The volume is lettered on the front cover—"Notes by Mr. Ruskin | on | Samuel Prout | and William Hunt," and up the back—"Notes by Mr. Ruskin on S. Prout & W. Hunt"; and across at the foot of the back—"The | Fine Art | Society." Five hundred copies were printed; price Two Guineas.

The text was that of the preceding edition, with a few notes (with regard to the ownership of drawings, etc.) added by the Fine Art Society.

*Reprinted* (1902) in *Ruskin on Pictures*, vol. ii. pp. 271–350.

*Reviews* appeared in the *Architect*, July 10, 1880; the *Times*, August 30; and the *Saturday Review*, September 25.

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*Variæ Lectiones.*—These have been already enumerated. In this edition a few misprints (in all previous editions) have been corrected: "bitter" for "hither" (p. 398); "77" for "67" (p. 429); "Pillar" for "Pillars" (pp. 435, 452); "Garisendà" for "Grisenda" (p. 451). See also p. 436 *n.*]

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## NOTE

I HAVE to thank the kind friends who have contributed drawings. I regret that very many of them have had to be returned, simply because I had already to my hand examples which sufficiently illustrated the lessons I wished to teach in putting together these Notes.

J. RUSKIN.

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Samuel Prout

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# PREFACE

1. It has been only in compliance with the often and earnestly-urged request of my friend Mr. Marcus Huish, that I have thrown the following notes together, on the works of two artists belonging to a time with which nearly all associations are now ended in the mind of general society; and of which my own memories, it seemed to me, could give little pleasure (even if I succeeded in rendering them intelligible) to a public indulged with far more curious arts, and eager for otherwise poignant interests, than those which seemed admirable, though not pretending to greatness, and were felt to be delightful, though not provoking enthusiasm, in the quiet and little diverted lives of the English middle classes "sixty years since."[1]

2. It is especially to be remembered that drawings of this simple character were made for these same middle classes, exclusively; and even for the second order of the middle classes, more accurately expressed by the term *bourgeoisie.* The great people always bought Canaletto, not Prout, and Van Huysum,[2] not Hunt. There was indeed no quality in the bright little water-colours which could look other than pert in ghostly corridors, and petty in halls of state; but they gave an unquestionable tone of liberal-mindedness to a suburban villa, and were the cheerfullest possible decorations for a moderate-sized breakfast-parlour opening on a nicely-mown lawn.[3] Their liveliness even rose, on occasion, to the charity of beautifying the narrow chambers of those whom business or fixed habit still retained in the obscurity of London itself; and I remember with peculiar respect the

[1] [See above, p. 306.]
[2] [See Vol. III. p. 672; Vol. XII. pp. 300, 455.]
[3] [See p. xxxv., above.]



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pride of a benevolent physician,[1] who never would exchange his neighbourhood to the poor of St. Giles's for the lucrative lustre of a West End square, in wreathing his tiny little front drawing-room with Hunt's loveliest apple-blossom, and taking the patients for whom he had prescribed fresh air the next instant on a little visit to the country.

3. Nor was this adaptation to the tastes and circumstances of the London citizen a constrained or obsequious compliance on the part of the kindly artists. They were themselves, in mind, as in habits of life, completely a part of the characteristic metropolitan population whom an occasional visit to the Continent always thrilled with surprise on finding themselves again among persons who familiarly spoke French; and whose summer holidays, though more customary, amused them nevertheless with the adventure, and beguiled them with the pastoral charm, of an uninterrupted picnic. Mr. Prout lived at Brixton,[2] just at the rural extremity of Cold Harbour Lane, where the spire of Brixton Church, the principal architectural ornament of the neighbourhood, could not but greatly exalt, by comparison, the impressions received from that of Strasburg Cathedral, or the Hôtel de Ville of Bruxelles; and Mr. Hunt, though often in the spring and summer luxuriating in country lodgings, was only properly at home in the Hampstead Road,* and never painted a cluster of nuts without some expression, visible enough by the manner of their presentation, of the pleasure it was to him to see them in the shell, instead of in a bag at the greengrocer's.

* See his own inscription, with LONDON in capitals, under No. 132.[3]

[1] [Probably Mr. R. Wade, who resided in Dean Street, Soho, and formed a collection of Hunt's works; dispersed in 1872.]

[2] [First at "Brixton Place"; after 1835, at "No. 2 Bedford Place, Clapham Rise"; after 1840, at "39 Torrington Square"; after 1845, at "No. 5 De Crespigny Terrace, Denmark Hill." In the latter years of his life he lived much at Hastings. In a letter written there he refers wistfully to "dearest and sweetest London": see Roget's *History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, ii. 55.]

[3] [The inscription is: "Love what you study, study what you love." William Hunt's London addresses were successively 36 Brownlow Street, Drury Lane; 6 Marchmont Street, Brunswick Square; 55 Burton Street, Burton Crescent; and 62 Stanhope Street, Hampstead Road.]

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4. The lightly rippled level of this civic life lay, as will be easily imagined, far beneath the distractions, while it maintained itself meekly, yet severely, independent of the advantages, held out by the social system of what is most reverently called "Town." Neither the disposition, the health, nor the means of either artist admitted of their spending their evenings, in general, elsewhere than by their own firesides; nor could a spring levée of English peeresses and foreign ambassadors[1] be invited by the modest painter whose only studio was his little back-parlour, commanding a partial view of the scullery steps and the water-butt. The fluctuations of moral and æsthetic sentiment in the public mind were of small moment to the humble colourist, who depended only on the consistency of its views on the subject of early strawberries; and the thrilling subjects presented by the events or politics of the day were equally indifferent to the designer who invited interest to nothing later than the architecture of the fifteenth century. Even the treasures of scientific instruction, and marvels of physical discovery, were without material influence on the tranquillity of the two native painters' uneducated skill. Prout drew every lovely street in Europe, without troubling himself to learn a single rule of perspective; while Hunt painted mossy banks for five-and-twenty years, without ever caring to know a sphagnum from a polypody, and embossed or embowered his birds' eggs to a perfection, which Greek connoisseurs would have assured us the mother had unsuspectingly sat on,[2] without enlarging his range of ornithological experience beyond the rarities of tomtit and hedge-sparrow.

5. This uncomplaining resignation of patronage, and unblushing blindness to instruction, were allied, in both painters, with a steady consistency in technical practice, which, from the first, and to the last, precluded both from all hope of

[1] [The MS. reads, "dazzling Duchesses and tremendous Excellencies."]

[2] [The MS. reads simply, ". . . a perfection which I doubt not the mothers would have sat on." For Ruskin's subsequent addition, referring to the stories which were current among the Greek connoisseurs of birds unsuspectingly pecking at grapes painted by Zeuxis, etc., see Vol. I. p. 268 *n*.]

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promotion to the honours, as it withheld them from the peril of entanglement in the rivalries, connected with the system of exhibition in the Royal Academy. Mr. Prout's method of work was entirely founded on the quite elementary qualities of white paper and black Cumberland lead; and expressly terminated within the narrow range of prismatic effects producible by a brown or blue outline, with a wash of ochre or cobalt. Mr. Hunt's early drawings depended for their peculiar charm on the most open and simple management of transparent colour; and his later ones, for their highest attainments, on the flexibility of a pigment which yielded to the slightest touch and softest motion of a hand always more sensitive than firm. The skill which unceasing practice, within limits thus modestly unrelaxed, and with facilities of instrument thus openly confessed, enabled each draughtsman in his special path to attain, was exerted with a vividness of instinct somewhat resembling that of animals, only in the slightest degree conscious of praiseworthiness, but animated by a healthy complacency, as little anxious for external sympathy as the self-content of a bee in the translucent symmetry of its cell, or of a chaffinch in the silver tracery of her nest—and uniting, through the course of their uneventful and active lives, the frankness of the bird with the industry of the insect.

6. In all these points of view, the drawings to which I venture, not without hesitation, to call the passing attention of the public, can claim regard only as examples of genius both narrowed and depressed; yet healthy enough to become more elastic under depression, and scintillant enough to be made more vivid by contraction. But there are other respects in which these seemingly unimportant works challenge graver study; and illustrate phases of our own national mind—I might perhaps say, even of national civilization—which coincide with many curious changes in social feelings, and may lead to results not easily calculable in social happiness.

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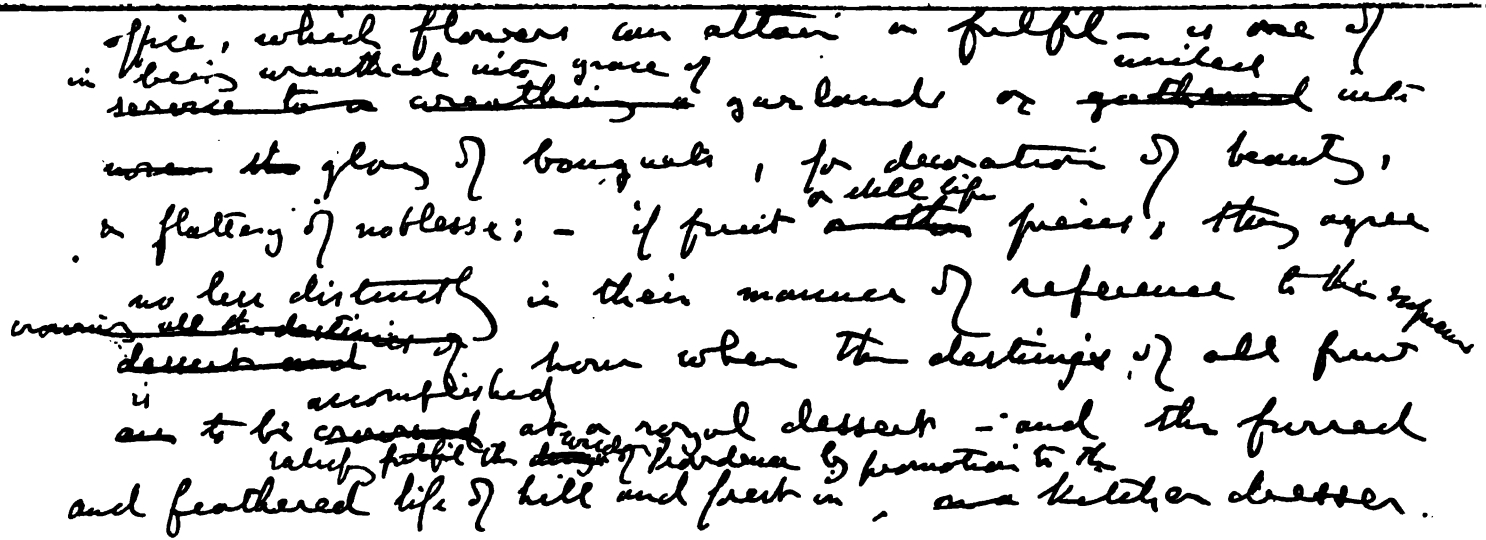

A Page of the MS. of "Notes on Prout and Hunt"

pp. 376, 377

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7. If the reader has any familiarity with the galleries of painting in the great cities of Europe,[1] he cannot but retain a clear, though somewhat monotonously calm, impression of the character of those polished flower pieces, or still-life pieces, which occupy subordinate corners in their smaller rooms; and invite to moments of repose, or frivolity, the attention and imagination which have been wearied in admiring the attitudes of heroism, and sympathizing with the sentiments of piety. Recalling to his memory the brightest examples of these which his experience can supply, he will find that all the older ones agree—if flower pieces—in a certain courtliness and formality of arrangement, implying that the highest honours which flowers can attain are in being wreathed into grace of garlands, or assembled in variegation of bouquets, for the decoration of beauty or flattery of noblesse. If fruit or still-life pieces, they agree no less distinctly in directness of reference to the supreme hour when the destiny of dignified fruit is to be accomplished in a royal dessert; and the furred and feathered life of hill and forest may bear witness to the Wisdom of Providence by its extinction for the kitchen dresser.

8. Irrespectively of these ornamental virtues, and culinary utilities, the painter never seems to perceive any conditions of beauty in the things themselves, which would make them worth regard for their own sake; nor, even in these appointed functions, are they ever supposed to be worth painting, unless the pleasures they procure be distinguished as those of the most exalted society. No artists of the old school would ever think of constructing a subject out of the herbs of a cottage garden, or viands of a rural feast. Whatever interest was then taken in the life of the lower orders involved always some reference to their rudenesses or vices; and rarely exhibits itself in any other expression than that of contempt for their employments, and reproach to their recreation.

[1] [The MS. adds, "or the scarcely less rich galleries of English, and a few remaining Italian, palaces."]

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9. In all such particulars the feelings shown in the works of Hunt, and of the school with which he was associated, directly reverse those of the preceding age. So far from being garlanded into any polite symmetry, his primroses fresh from the bank, and hawthorns white from the hedge, confess at once their artless origin in the village lane—have evidently been gathered only at the choice, and thrown down at the caprice, of the farmer's children; and cheerfully disclaim all hope of ever contributing to the splendours or felicities of the great. The bloom with which he bedews the grape, the frosted gold with which he frets the pine, are spent chiefly to show what a visible grace there is in the fruits of the earth, which we may sometimes feel that it is rude to touch and swinish to taste; and the tendernesses of hand and thought that soothe the rose-grey breast of the fallen dove, and weave the couch of moss for its quiet wings, propose no congratulation to the spectator on the future flavour of the bird in a pie.

10. It is a matter of extreme difficulty, but of no less interest, to distinguish, in this order of painting, what part of it has its origin in a plebeian—not to say vulgar—simplicity, which education would have invested with a severer charm; and what part is grounded on a real sense of natural beauty, more pure and tender than could be discerned amid the luxury of courts, or stooped to by the pride of nobles.

11. For an especial instance, the drawing of the interior, No. 174,[1] may be taken as a final example of the confidence which the painter felt in his power of giving some kind of interest to the most homely objects, and rendering the transitions of ordinary light and shade impressive, though he had nothing more sacred to illuminate than a lettuce, and nothing more terrible to hide than a reaping-hook. The dim light from the flint-glass window, and the general disposition and scale of the objects it falls on, remind me sometimes, however unreasonably, of the little oratory into

[1] [For another reference to it, see p. 383.]

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which the deeply-worn steps ascend from the Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick. But I know perfectly well, and partly acknowledge the rightness of his judgment, though I cannot analyze it, that Hunt would no more have painted that knightly interior instead of this, with helmets lying about instead of saucepans, and glowing heraldries staying the light instead of that sea-green lattice, than he would have gone for a walk round his farm in a court dress.

12. "Plebeian—not to say vulgar"—choice; but I fear that even "vulgar," with full emphasis, must be said sometimes in the end. Not that a pipkin of cream in Devonshire is to be thought of less reverently than a vase of oil or canister of bread in Attica; but that the English dairymaid in her way can hold her own with the Attic canephora, and the peasant children of all countries where leaves are green and waters clear, possess a grace of their own no less divine than that of branch and wave. And it is to be sorrowfully confessed that the good old peach and apple painter was curiously insensible to this brighter human beauty; and though he could scarcely pass a cottage door around his Berkshire[1] home without seeing groups of which Correggio would have made Cupids, and Luini cherubs, turned away from them all, to watch the rough ploughboy at his dinner, or enliven a study of his parlour-maid at her glass (158) with the elegance of a red and green pincushion.[2]

13. And yet, for all this, the subtle sense of beauty above referred to was always in his mind, and may be proved and partly illustrated, by notice of two very minute, but very constant, differences between his groups of still life and those of the Dutch painters. In every flower piece of pretension, by the masters of that old school, two accessory points of decoration are never absent. The first of these is the dew-drop, or rain-drop—it may be two or three drops, of either size,

[1] [? Hampshire. The country address given by Hunt in the catalogues was "Park-gate, Bramley, near Basingstoke, Hants." His other favourite resort was Hastings.]

[2] [For another reference to this drawing ("Sunday Morning"), see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 117).]

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on one of the smoothest petals of the central flower. This is always, and quite openly, done to show how well the painter can do it—not in the least with any enjoyment of wetness in the flower. The Dutchman never got a wet flower to paint from. He had his exquisite and exemplary poppy or tulip brought in from the market as he had occasion, and put on its dew-drops for it as a lady's dressing-maid puts on her diamonds, merely for state. But Hunt saw the flowers in his little garden really bright in the baptismal dawn, or drenched with the rain of noontide, and knew that no mortal could paint any real likeness of that heaven-shed light;—and never once attempted it: you will find nothing in any of his pictures merely put on that you may try to wipe it off.

14. But there was a further *tour de force* demanded of the Dutch workman, without which all his happiest preceding achievements would have been unacknowledged. Not only a dew-drop, but, in some depth of bell, or cranny of leaf, a bee, or a fly, was needful for the complete satisfaction of the connoisseur. In the articulation of the fly's legs, or the neurography of the bee's wings, the Genius of painting was supposed to signify her accepted disciples; and their work went forth to the European world, thenceforward, without question, as worthy of its age and country. But, without recognizing in myself, or desiring to encourage in my scholars, any unreasonable dislike or dread of the lower orders of living creatures, I trust that the reader will feel with me that none of Mr. Hunt's peaches or plums would be made daintier by the detection on them of even the most cunningly latent wasp, or cautiously rampant caterpillar; and will accept, without so much opposition as it met with forty years ago, my then first promulgated, but steadily since repeated assertion, that the "modern painter" had in these matters less vanity than the ancient one, and better taste.[1]

[1] [Better than some of the ancients (*i.e.*, the Dutch), but no better than others (*i.e.*, Titian); see the passage, in the preface to the second edition of *Modern Painters*, vol. i., contrasting Titian's method of painting flowers with that of the Dutch: "no dew-drops, nor flies, nor trickeries of any kind" (Vol. III. p. 33).]

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15. Another interesting evidence of Hunt's feeling for beauty is to be found in the unequal distribution of his pains to different parts of his subject. This is, indeed, one of the peculiar characteristics of our modern manner, and in the abstract not a laudable one. All the old masters, without exception, complete their pictures from corner to corner with a strictly driven level of deliberation; and whether it be a fold of drapery, a blade of grass, or a wreath of cloud, on which they are subordinately occupied, the pencil moves at the same tranquil pace, and the qualities of the object are rendered with the same fixed attention. In this habitual virtue, the dull and the brilliant, the weak and the mighty, concur without exception; holding it for their first point of honour to be thorough craftsmen, and to carry on the solicitude of their skill throughout the piece, as an armourer would hammer a corslet, or a housewife knit a stocking, leaving no edge untempered, and no thread unfastened. Modern petulance and incompetence lead, on the contrary, to the flaunting of dexterity in one place, and the pretence of ease in another—complete some portions of the subject with hypocritical affection, and abandon others in ostentatious contempt. In some few cases, the manner arises from a true eagerness of imagination, or kindly and natural desire for sympathy in particular likings; but in the plurality of instances, the habit allies itself with mistaken principles of art, and protects impatience and want of skill under the shield of philosophy.

16. Few modern pieces of oil-painting are more accomplished or deliberate than those of Meissonier; and in the example placed on the table in the centre of the room,[1] his subject was one which he certainly would not have treated, consciously, with prosaic indignity of manner, or injurious economy of toil. Yet the inequality of workmanship has depressed what might have been a most sublime picture almost to the level of a scenic effect. The dress of the

[1] ["Napoleon in 1814." See below, p. 438.]

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Emperor and housings of his steed are wrought with the master's utmost care; but the landscape is nearly unintelligible, and the ground a mere conventional diaper of feeble green and grey. It is difficult to describe the height to which the picture would have risen above its present power, if a ruined French village had been represented with Flemish precision amidst the autumnal twilight of the woods; and the ground over which the wearied horse bears his dreaming rider, made lovely with its native wild-flowers.[1]

17. In all such instances, the hold which a true sense of beauty has over the painter's mind may be at once ascertained by observing the nature of the objects to which his pains have been devoted. No master with a fine instinct for colour would spend his time with deliberate preference on the straps and buckles of modern horse furniture, rather than on the surrounding landscape or foreground flowers, though in a subject like this he would have felt it right to finish both, to the spectator's content, if not to his amazement. And among the numerous rustic scenes by Hunt which adorn these walls, though all are painted with force and spirit, none are recommended to our curiosity by an elaborate finish given to ungraceful objects. His final powers are only employed on motives like the dead doves in Nos. 139 and 145, accompanied by incidents more or less beautiful and seemly.

18. I must even further guard my last sentence, by the admission that the means by which his utmost intentions of finish are accomplished, can never, in the most accurate sense, be termed "elaborate." When the thing to be represented is minute, the touches which express it are necessarily minute also—they cannot be bold on the edge of a nutshell, nor free within the sphere of a bird's nest—but they are always frank and clear, to a degree which may seem not only imperfect, but even harsh or offensive, to eyes trained in more tender or more formal schools.

[1] [Compare, on this subject of backgrounds, pp. 117, 283, above.]

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This broken execution by detached and sharply-defined touches became indeed, in process of years, a manner in which the painter somewhat too visibly indulged, or prided himself; but it had its origin and authority in the care with which he followed the varieties of colour in the shadow, no less than in the lights, of even the smallest objects. It is easy to obtain smoothness and unity of gradation when working with a single tint; but if all accidents of local colour, and all differences of hue between direct and reflected light, are to be rendered with absolute purity, some breaking of the texture becomes inevitable. In many cases, also, of the most desirable colours, no pigments mixed on the palette, but only interlaced touches of pure tints on the paper, will attain the required effect. The indefinable primrose colour, for instance, of the glazed porringer in the foreground of No. 174 could not possibly have been given with a mixed tint. The breaking of grey through gold by which it has been reached is one of the prettiest pieces of work to be seen in these rooms; it exhibits the utmost skill of the artist, and is an adequate justification of his usual manner.

19. Among the earliest statements of principles of art made in the *Stones of Venice*,[1] one of those chiefly fortunate in obtaining credit with my readers was the course of argument urging frankness in the confession of the special means by which any artistic result has been obtained, and of the limitations which these appointed instruments, and the laws proper to the use of them, set to its scope. Thus the threads in tapestry, the tesseræ in mosaic, the joints of the stones in masonry, and the movements of the pencil in painting, are shown without hesitation by the greatest masters in those arts, and often enforced and accented by the most ingenious; while endeavours to conceal them—as to make needlework look like pencilling, or efface, in painting, the rugged freedom or joyful lightness of its

[1] [The reference seems rather to be to the *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, ch. ii., "The Lamp of Truth."]

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handiwork into the deceptive image of a natural surface—are, without any exception, signs of declining intelligence, and benumbed or misguided feelings.

20. I therefore esteem Hunt's work all the more exemplary in acknowledging without disguise the restrictions imposed on the use of water-colour as a medium for vigorously realistic effects; and I have placed pieces of it in my Oxford school[1] as standards of imitative (as distinguished from decorative) colour, in the rightness and usefulness of which I have every day more confirmed trust. I am aware of no other pieces of art, in modern days, at once so sincere and so accomplished: only let it be noted that I use the term "sincere" in this case, not as imputing culpable fallacy to pictures of more imaginative power, but only as implying the unbiassed directness of aim at the realization of very simple facts, which is often impossible to the passions, or inconsistent with the plans, of greater designers.

21. In more cautiously guarded terms of praise, and with far less general proposal of their peculiar qualities for imitation, I have yet, both in my earlier books, and in recent lectures at Oxford,[2] spoken of the pencil sketches of Prout with a reverence and enthusiasm which it is my chief personal object in the present exhibition to justify, or at least to explain; so that future readers may not be offended, as I have known some former ones to be, by expressions which seemed to them incompatible with the general tenor of my teaching.

22. It is quite true that my feelings towards this painter are much founded on, or at least coloured by, early associations; but I have never found the memories of my childhood beguile me into any undue admiration of the architecture in Billiter Street or Brunswick Square;[3] and I

[1] [See, *e.g.*, No. 213 in the "Educational Series," described on p. 49 of Ruskin's "Catalogue of the Educational Series," ed. 1874.]

[2] [See references given above, p. xxxv.]

[3] [Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, his birthplace; Billiter Street, his father's office.]

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believe the characters which first delighted me in the drawings of this—in his path unrivalled—artist, deserve the best attention and illustration of which in my advanced years I am capable.

The little drawing, No. 95, bought, I believe, by my grandfather, hung in the corner of our little dining parlour at Herne Hill as early as I can remember, and had a most fateful and continual power over my childish mind.[1] Men are made what they finally become only by the external accidents which are in harmony with their inner nature.[2] I was not made a student of Gothic merely because this little drawing of Prout's was the first I knew; but the hereditary love of antiquity, and thirst for country life, which were as natural to me as a little jackdaw's taste for steeples or dabchick's for reeds, were directed and tempered in a very definite way by the qualities of this single and simple drawing.

23. In the first place, it taught me generally to like ruggedness; and the conditions of joint in moulding, and fitting of stones in walls which were most weather-worn, and like the grey dykes of a Cumberland hillside. This predilection—passion, I might more truly call it—holds me yet so strongly that I can never quite justly conceive the satisfaction of the original builders, even of the most delicate edifice, in seeing its comely stones well set together. Giotto's tower, and the subtly Cyclopean walls of early Verona, have indeed chastised the prejudice out of me, so far as regards work in marble enriched with mosaic and pure sculpture; but I had almost rather see Furness or Fountains Abbey strewed in grass-grown heaps by their brook-sides, than in the first glow and close setting of their fresh-hewn sandstone. Whatever is rationally justifiable in this feeling, so far as it is dependent on just reverence for

[1] ["An English Cottage." It will be remembered that Ruskin's first work, *The Poetry of Architecture*, written when he was nineteen, was partly devoted to a comparison of the cottage architecture of England with that of the Continent.]

[2] [Compare *Præterita*, i. ch. ii. § 28.]



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the signs of antiquity, and may therefore be trusted to, as existing generally in the minds of persons of thoughtful temperament, was enough explained, long ago, in the passages of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, which, the book not being now generally accessible,[1] I reprint in Appendix I.; but openness of joints and roughness of masonry are not exclusively signs of age or decay in buildings: and I did not at that time enough insist on the propriety, and even the grace, of such forms of literal "rustication"* as are compelled by coarseness of materials, and plainness of builders, when proper regard is had to economy, and just honour rendered to provincial custom and local handicraft. These are now so little considered that the chief difficulties I have had in the minute architectural efforts possible at Brantwood have been to persuade my Coniston builder into satisfaction with Coniston slate, and retention of Coniston manners in dressing—or rather, leaving undressed—its primitively fractured edges. If I ever left him alone for a day, some corner stone was sure to be sent for from Bath or Portland, and the ledges I had left to invite stonecrop and swallows, trimmed away in the advanced style of the railway station at Carnforth.[2]

24. There is more, however, to be noted in this little old-fashioned painting than mere delight in weedy eaves and mortarless walls—pre-eminently its repose in such placid subjects of thought as the cottage and its neighbouring wood contain for an easily-pleased observer, without the least recommendation of them by graceful incident or plausible

* All the forms of massive foundation of which the aspect, in buildings of pretension, has been described by this word, took their origin from the palaces in Florence, whose foundations were laid with unchiselled blocks of the grey gritstone of Fésole, and looked like a piece of its crags.

[1] [Written before the issue of the small edition of 1890. The passages are not here reprinted, but the references are supplied: see below, p. 448 *n.*]

[2] [The main additions made to Brantwood by Ruskin were a window-turret, a new dining-room facing the lake, and a new studio. Since his death a further addition contemplated by him has been made, consisting of an enlargement of the drawing-room and the addition of a small sitting-room off it.]

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story. If we can be content with sunshine on our old brown roof, and the sober green of a commonplace English wood, protected by a still more commonplace tarred paling, and allowing the fancy therefore not to expatiate even so far as the hope of a walk in it—it is well; and if not—poor Prout has no more to offer us, and will not even concede the hope that one of those diagonally-dressed children may be the least pretty, or provoke us, by the gleam of a riband, or quaintness of a toy, into asking so much as what the itinerant pedlar has in his basket.

25. I was waiting for a train the other day at Dover, and in an old-fashioned print-shop on the hill up to the Priory station saw a piece of as old-fashioned picture-making, elaborately engraved, and of curious interest to me, at the moment, with reference to my present essay. It belonged to the dull British school which was founded on conscientious following of the miniature methods and crowded incidents of Dutch painting; and always dutifully proposed to give the spectator as much entertainment as could be collected into the given space of canvas. There was an ideal village street to begin with, the first cottage gable at the corner having more painting (and very good and pretty painting) spent on the mere thatch of it, than there is in the entire Prout drawing under our notice. Beyond the laborious gable came some delicately-branched trees; and then the village street, in and out, half a mile long, with shops, and signs, and what not; and then the orthodox church steeple, and then more trees, and then a sky with rolling white clouds after Wouvermans;—but all this, though the collected quantity of it would have made half-a-dozen country villages, if well pulled out, was only the beginning of the subject. Gable, street, church, rookery, and sky were all, in the painter's mind, too thin and spare entertainment. So out of the gable window looked a frightened old woman; out of the cottage door rushed an angry old man; over the garden palings tumbled two evil-minded boys; after the evil-minded boys rushed an indignantly-minded dog; and

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in the centre of the foreground, cynosure of the composition, were a couple of fighting-cocks, one fallen, the other crowing for conquest—highly finished, both, from wattle to spur. And the absolute pictorial value of the whole,—church and sky—village and startled inhabitants—vagabond boys, vindictive dog, and victorious bird (the title of the picture being "The Moment of Victory"),—the intrinsic value of the whole, I say, being—not the twentieth part of a Hunt's five-minutes' sketch of one cock's feather.

And yet it was all prettily painted—as I said; and possessed every conceivable quality that can be taught in a school, or bought for money: and the artist who did it had probably, in private life, a fair average quantity of sense and feeling, but had left both out of his picture, in order to imitate what he had been taught was fine, and produce what he expected would pay.

26. Take another instance, more curious, and nearer to matters in hand. The little photograph, No. 117 on the south side of the screen, was made in 1858 (by my own setting of the camera), in the courtyard of one of the prettiest yet remaining fragments of fifteenth-century domestic buildings in Abbeville.[1] The natural vine leaves consent in grace and glow with the life of the old wood carving; and though the modern white porcelain image ill replaces the revolution-deposed Madonna, and only pedestals of saints, and canopies, are left on the propping beams of the gateway—and though the cask, and cooper's tools, and gardener's spade and ladder are little in accord with what was once stately in the gate, and graceful in the winding stair—the declining shadows of the past mingle with the hardship of the present day in no unkindly sadness; and the little angle of courtyard, if tenderly painted in the depression of its fate, has enough still to occupy as much of our best thought as may be modestly claimed for his picture by any master not of the highest order.

[1] [This photograph, here reproduced, is again referred to in *The Eagle's Nest*, § 91. A copy of it is No. 62 in the "Educational Series" in the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford.]

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Photographed by J. Ruskin Allen & Co. Sc.

A Courtyard at Abbeville

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But these motives of wise and gentle feeling would not appeal to the public mind in competitive exhibition. Such efforts as are made by our own landscapists to keep record of any fast-vanishing scenes of the kind, are scarcely with good will accepted even in our minor art galleries: and leave to share in the lustre of the Parisian "Salon de 1878" could only be hoped for by the author of the composition from which the photograph, No. 118,[1] is taken, on condition of his giving pungency to the feeble savour of architectural study by a condiment of love, assassination, and despair.

27. It will not, I trust, be supposed that in anything I have said, or may presently further say, I have the smallest intention of diminishing the praise of nobly dramatic or pathetic pictures. The best years of my life have been spent in the endeavour to illustrate the neglected greatest of these, in Venice, Milan, and Rome; while my last and most deliberate writings have lost much of their influence with the public by disagreeably insisting that the duty of a great painter was rather to improve them than amuse. But it remains always a sure elementary principle that interest in the story of pictures does not in the least signify a relative interest in the art of painting, or in the continual beauty and calm virtue of nature; and that the wholesomest manner in which the intelligence of young people can be developed (I may say, even the intelligence of modest old people cultivated) in matters of this kind, is by inducing them accurately to understand what painting is as mere painting, and music as mere music, before they are led into further question of the uses of either, in policy, morals, or religion.

28. And I cannot but recollect with feelings of considerable refreshment, in these days of the deep, the lofty, and the mysterious, what a simple company of connoisseurs we were, who crowded into happy meeting, on the first Mondays in Mays of long ago, in the bright large room of the Old Water-Colour Society;[2] and discussed, with holiday

[1] [See below, p. 437. The editors are, however, unable to identify the picture of Abbeville referred to, as the catalogue of the Salon contains none so entitled.]

[2] [See note on p. 73; and compare *The Art of England*, § 159.]

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gaiety, the unimposing merits of the favourites, from whose pencils we knew precisely what to expect, and by whom we were never either disappointed or surprised. Copley Fielding[1] used to paint fishing-boats for us, in a fresh breeze, "Off Dover," "Off Ramsgate," "Off the Needles,"—off everywhere on the south coast where anybody had been last autumn; but we were always kept pleasantly in sight of land, and never saw so much as a gun fired in distress. Mr. Robson would occasionally paint a Bard, on a heathery crag in Wales; or, it might be, a Lady of the Lake on a similar piece of Scottish foreground—"Benvenue in the distance." A little fighting, in the time of Charles the First, was permitted to Mr. Cattermole; and Mr. Cristall would sometimes invite virtuous sympathy to attend the meeting of two lovers at a Wishing-gate or a Holy Well.[2] But the farthest flights even of these poetical members of the Society were seldom beyond the confines of the British Islands; the vague dominions of the air, and vasty ones of the deep, were held to be practically unvoyageable by our un-Dædal pinions, and on the safe level of our native soil, the sturdy statistics of Mr. de Wint, and blunt pastorals of Mr. Cox, restrained within the limits of probability and sobriety alike the fancy of the idle and the ambition of the vain.[3]

29. It became, however, by common and tacit consent, Mr. Prout's privilege, and it remained his privilege exclusively, to introduce foreign elements of romance and amazement into this—perhaps slightly fenny—atmosphere of English common sense. In contrast with our Midland locks

[1] [For Copley Fielding, see General Index; for Robson, Vol. III. p. 193 *n.*; and for Cattermole, Vol. III. p. 46 *n.* Joshua Cristall (1767–1847) was one of the foundation members of the Old Water-Colour Society, and three times its President. Several of his drawings are in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

[2] [The MS. adds:—

"But we did not in the least demand for our Mayday entertainment to be either thrilled, appalled, or puzzled; nor were we at all disposed to bring our business cares into questions of art investment. When we bought a drawing we had not the least intention of selling it again; and we did not care in a general way to give more than 15 or 20 guineas for it."]

[3] [For De Wint and Cox, see the references given in Vol. I. p. 427 *n.*]

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and barges, his "On the Grand Canal, Venice," was an Arabian enchantment; among the mildly elegiac country churchyards of Llangollen or Stoke Pogis, his "Sepulchral Monuments at Verona" were Shakespearian tragedy; and to us who had just come into the room out of Finsbury or Mincing Lane, his "Street in Nuremberg" was a German fairy tale. But we none of us recognized then (and I know not how far any of us recognize yet), that these feelings of ours were dependent on the mediation of a genius as earnest as it was humble, doing work not in its essence romantic at all; but, on the contrary, the only quite useful, faithful, and evermore serviceable work that the Society—by hand of any of its members—had ever done, or could ever, in that phase of its existence, do: containing, moreover, a statement of certain social facts only to be gathered, and image of certain pathetic beauties only to be seen, at that particular moment in the history of (what we are pleased to call) civilization.[1]

30. "As earnest," I repeat, "as it was humble." The drawings actually shown on the Exhibition walls gave no sufficient clue to Prout's real character, and no intimation whatever of his pauseless industry. He differed, in these unguessed methods of toil, wholly from the other members of the Society. De Wint's morning and afternoon sketches from Nature, with a few solidifying touches, were at once ready for their frames. Fielding's misty downs and dancing seas were softened into their distances of azure, and swept into their hollows of foam, at his ease, in his study, with conventional ability and lightly burdened memory. Hunt's models lay on the little table at his side all day; or stood as long as he liked by the barn-door, for a penny. But Prout's had to be far sought, and with difficulty detailed and secured—the figures gliding on the causeway or mingling in the market-place, stayed not his leisure; and his drawings prepared for the Water-colour room were

[1] [For this aspect of Prout's work, see the earlier essay, Vol. XII. pp. 314, 315.]

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usually no more than mechanical abstracts, made absolutely for support of his household, from the really vivid sketches which, with the whole instinct and joy of his nature, he made all through the cities of ancient Christendom, without an instant of flagging energy, and without a thought of money payment. They became to him afterwards a precious library, of which he never parted with a single volume as long as he lived. But it was the necessary consequence of the devotion of his main strength to the obtaining of these studies, that at his death they remained a principal part of the provision left for his family, and were therefore necessarily scattered. I cannot conceive any object more directly tending to the best interests of our students both in art and history, than the reassembling a chosen series of them for the nation, as opportunity may be given.

31. Let me, however, before entering on any special notice of those which Mr. Huish has been able at this time (and I myself by the good help of the painter's son, Mr. Gillespie Prout), to obtain for exhibition, state in all clearness the terms under which they should be judged, and may be enjoyed. For just as we ought not to match a woodblock of Bewick's against a fresco by Correggio, we must not compare a pencil outline of Prout's with any such ideals of finished street effect as Flemish painting once produced. Prout is not a colourist, nor in any extended or complete sense of the word a painter. He is essentially a draughtsman with the lead pencil, as Dürer was essentially a draughtsman with the burin, and Bewick on the woodblock. And the chief art-virtue of the pieces here exhibited is the intellectual abstraction which represents many features of things with few lines.[1]

32. Take the little view in Amiens, No. 7, showing the west front of the cathedral in the distance. That front is enriched with complex ranks of arcade and pinnacle, which it would take days to outline perfectly, and which, seen at

[1] [Compare "The Black Arts," § 3, p. 359, above.]

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the distance assumed in this drawing, gather into a mystery which no fineness of hand could imitatively follow. But all this has been abstracted into a few steady lines, with an intelligence of choice and precision of notation which build the cathedral as if it stood there, and in such accurate likeness that it could be recognized at a glance from every other mass of Gothic in Europe.[1]

That drawing dependent on abstraction of this kind, in which forms are expressed rather as a mineralogist would draw a crystal than with any investing mystery of shade or effect, cannot be carried beyond the point assigned, nor convey any sense of extreme beauty or majesty when these really exist in its subject, must be conceded at once, and in full. But there is a great deal of scenery in this Europe of ours not lovely, and a great deal of habitation in this Europe of ours not sublime, yet both extremely worthy of being recorded in a briefly crystalline manner. And with scenes only, and dwellings only, of this ruder nature, Prout is concerned.

33. Take, for instance, the general facts respecting the valley of the Somme, collected in this little sketch of Amiens. That river, and the Oise, with other neighbouring minor streams, flow through a chalk district intersected by very ancient valleys, filled mostly with peat up to sea-level, but carrying off a large portion of the rainfall over the whole surface of the upper plains, which, open and arable,

[1] [The MS. here adds :—

". . . ; and we may say of the piece of painting, just as positively as of a Greek statue or Holbein portrait, 'It cannot be better done.' No one knows the difficulty of doing it as well who has not tried it with the same sincerity of affection for Amiens, and the same degree of disaffection for himself, neither being at all common, the disaffection for oneself especially. For if indeed one cares for Gothic or for Amiens, or for one's own notions of either, it is almost impossible to stop from drawing this bit of steeple, and that bit of tracery, and the other bit of buttress, and one little window in a particular roof—and so on—till the paper is covered with a quantity of detached memoranda, or detached endeavours at memoranda, pushed to failure—but nothing that will explain itself to others, or be touching and impressive as a total reality."

For the saying "It cannot be better done," see Vol. V. p. 331; Vol. VI. p. 159; Vol. XI. p. 14.]

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retain scarcely any moisture in morasses, pools, or deep grass. The rivers, therefore, though with little fall, run always fast and brimful, divided into many serviceable branches and runlets; while the older villages and cities on their banks are built of timber and brick, or, in the poorer cottages, timber and clay; but their churches of an adhesive and durable chalk rock, yielding itself with the utmost ease to dexterities of deep incision, and relieving, at first with lace-like whiteness, and always with a pleasant pearly grey, the shadows so obtained. No sensual arts or wealthy insolences have ever defiled or distorted the quiet temper of the northern French race; and in this busy little water-street of Amiens (you see that Prout has carefully indicated its rapid current—a navigable and baptismal brook, past step and door—water that one can float with and wash with, not a viscous vomit of black poison, like an English river) you have clearly pictured to you a state of peasant life assembled in the fellowship of a city, yet with as little pride as if still in the glades of Arden, and united chiefly for the sake of mere neighbourliness, and the sense of benediction and guardianship in the everywhere visible pinnacles of the temple built by their fathers, nor yet forsaken by their fathers' God.[1]

All this can be enough told in a few rightly laid pencil lines, and more it is needless to tell of so lowly provincial life.

Needless, at least, for the general public. For the closer student of architecture, finer drawing may be needed; but even for such keener requirement Prout will not, for a time, fail us.

34. Five-and-twenty miles down the Somme lies the little ramparted town of Abbeville;[2] rampart only of the

[1] [It will be remembered that "Our Fathers have Told us" (Psalm xliv. 1) was the title chosen by Ruskin for an intended series of historical books, of which the first —*The Bible of Amiens*—was issued in 1883–1885. With the description here given of the country around Amiens, compare ch. i. of that book ("By the Rivers of Waters"); *Præterita*, i. ch. ix. §§ 177–181; and the lecture (not hitherto printed) on "The Flamboyant Architecture of the Valley of the Somme," included in a later volume of this edition.]

[2] [See, again, *Præterita*, i. ch. ix., for a fuller description of Abbeville.]

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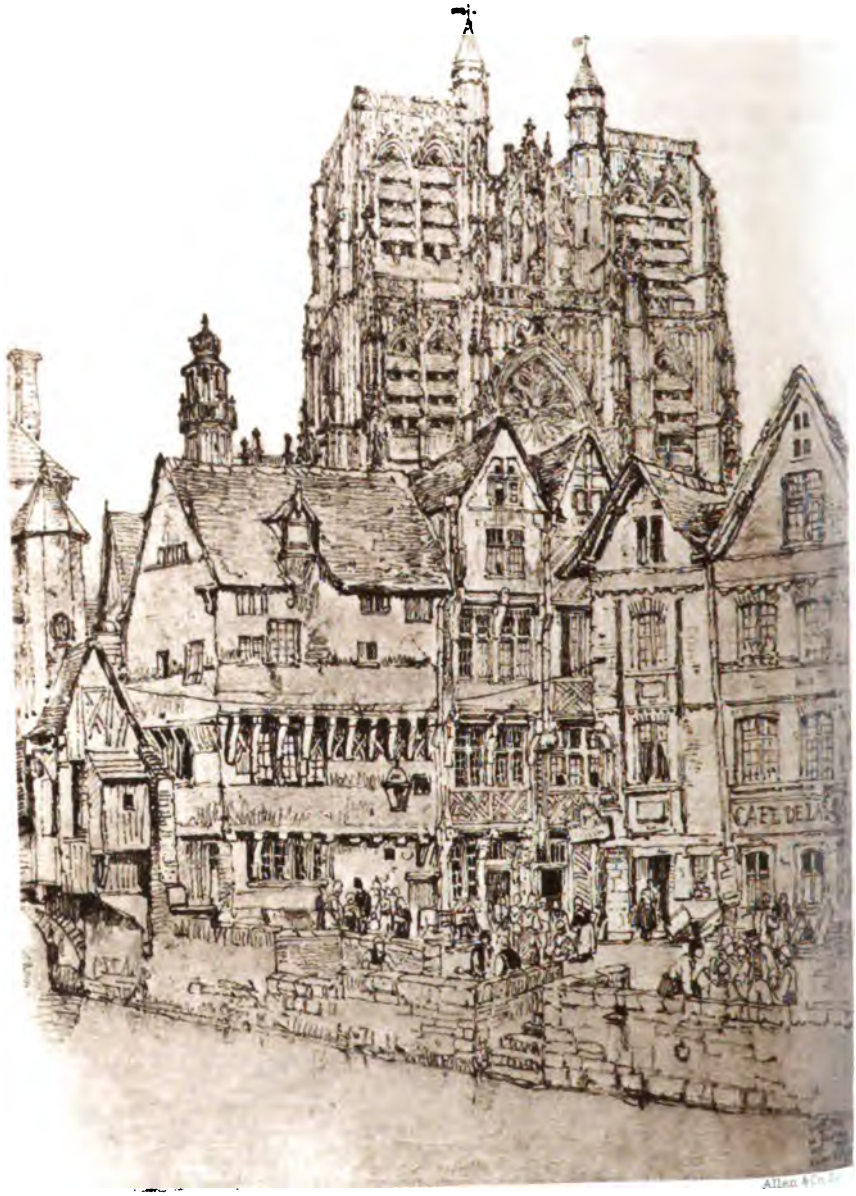


S. Prout

Abbeville

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Grand Monarque's time, but the walls of might long ago, in the days of Crécy; and few French provincial bourgs had then more numerous or beautiful monasteries, hospitals, chapels, and churches. Of the central St. Wulfran, never completed, there remain only the colossal nave, the ruined transept walls, and the lordly towers and porches of the west front. The drawing No. 4, quite one of the best examples of Prout's central time in the room, most faithfully represents this western pile of tracery and fretwork, with the filial richness of the timber houses that once stood round it.

None of the beautiful ones here seen are now left; and one day, perhaps, even France herself will be grateful to the wandering Londoner, who drew them as they once were, and copied, without quite understanding, every sign and word on them.

And as one of the few remaining true records of fifteenth-century France, such as her vestiges remained after all the wreck of revolution and recoil of war had passed over them, this pencil drawing, slight as it seems, may well take rank beside any pen-sketch by Holbein in Augsburg or Gentile Bellini in Venice. As a piece of composition and general treatment it might be reasoned on for days; for the cunning choices of omission, the delicate little dexterities of adjustment — the accents without vulgarity, and reticences without affectation—the exactly enough everywhere, to secure an impression of reality, and the instant pause at the moment when another touch would have been tiresome,— are, in the soberest truth, more wonderful than most of the disciplined compositions of the greater masters, for no scruple checks *them* for an instant in changing or introducing what they choose; but Prout gives literal, and all but servile, portrait, only managing somehow to get the checkers of woodwork to carry down the richness of the towers into the houses; then to get the broad white wall of the nearer houses to contrast with both; and then sets the transept turret to peep over the roof just enough to etherealize its

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practicality, and the black figure to come in front of it to give lustre to its whiteness; and so on throughout, down to the last and minutest touches: — the incomprehensiblest classical sonata is not more artificial — the sparklingest painted window not more vivid, and the sharpest photograph not half so natural.

85. In sequence of this drawing, I may point out seven others of like value, equally estimable and unreplaceable, both in matters of Art, and—I use the word, as will be seen presently,[1] in its full force—of History,—namely:

No. 9. Evreux.
No. 10. Strasburg.
No. 19. Antwerp.
No. 47. Domo d'Ossola.
No. 48. Como.
No. 65. Bologna.
No. 71. The Coliseum.

I choose these eight drawings (counting the Abbeville), four belonging to North France and Germany, four to Italy, of which the Northern ones do indeed utterly represent the spirit of the architecture chosen; but the Southern subjects are much more restricted in expression, for Prout was quite unable to draw the buildings of the highest Italian school: yet he has given the vital look of Italy in his day more truly than any other landscapist, be he who he may; and not excepting even Turner, for *his* ideal is always distinctly Turnerian, and not the mere blunt and sorrowful fact.

86. You might perhaps, and very easily, think at first that these Prout subjects were as much "Proutized" (Copley Fielding first used that word to me[2]) as Turner's were Turnerized. They are not so, by any manner of means—or rather, they are so by manner and means only, not by sight or heart. Turner saw things as Shelley or Keats did;

[1] [See the next section, and compare Vol. IV. p. 382, and Vol. XII. p. 151.]
[2] [See for Ruskin's former use of the word, Vol. IX. p. 303 n.]

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and with perfectly comprehensive power, gave all that such eyes can summon, to gild, or veil, the fatalities of material truth.[1] But Prout saw only what all the world sees, what is substantially and demonstrably there; and drew that reality in his much-arrested and humble manner indeed, but with perfectly apostolic faithfulness. He reflected the scene like some rough old Etruscan mirror—jagged, broken, blurred, if you will, but *It*, the thing itself still; while Turner gives *it*, and himself too, and ever so much of fairyland besides. His Florence or Nemi[2] compels me to think, as a scholar, or (for so much of one as may be in me) a poet; but Prout's harbour of old Como is utterly and positively the very harbour I landed in when I was a boy of fourteen, after a day's rowing from Cadenabbia, and it makes me young again, and hot, and happy, to look at it.[3] And that Bologna! Well, the tower *does* lean a little too far over, certainly; but what blessedness to be actually there, and to think we shall be in Venice to-morrow!

87. But note that the first condition of all these really great drawings (as indeed for all kinds of other good), is unaffectedness. If ever Prout strains a nerve, or begins to think what other people will say or feel—nay, if he ever allows his own real faculty of chiaroscuro to pronounce itself consciously, he falls into fourth and fifth rate work directly;[4] and the entire force of him can be found only where it has been called into cheerful exertion by subjects moderately, yet throughout, delightful to him; which present no difficulties to be conquered, no discords to be reconciled, and have just enough of clarion in them to rouse him to his paces, without provoking him to prance or capriole.

88. I should thus rank the drawing of Como (48) as

[1] [As an instance of the polishing which this preface received on revision, we may here give the MS. version:—

"Turner *saw* the thing other than it was; and with perfectly comprehensive and unarrested power painted it in a certain sense other than it was—as none but he ever saw it, or will see. But Prout . . ."]

[2] [Both in Ruskin's collection. See Vol. XIII. pp. 424, 426.]

[3] [Ruskin describes his first visit to the Lake of Como in *Præterita*, i. ch. vi.]

[4] [Compare Vol. XII. p. 385, where the same point is made in the case of Turner.]

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quite of the first class, and in the front rank of that class. Unattractive at first, its interest will increase every moment that you stay by it; and every little piece of it is a separate picture, all the better in itself for its subjection to the whole.

You may at first think the glassless windows too black. But nothing can be too black for an open window in a sunny Italian wall, at so short a distance. You may think the hills too light, but nothing can be too light for olive hills in midday summer. "They would have come dark against the sky?" Yes, certainly; but we don't pretend to draw Italian skies,—only the ruined port of Como, which is verily here before us—(alas! at Como no more, having long since been filled up, levelled, and gravelled, and made an "esplanade" for modern Italy to spit over in its idle afternoons). But take the lens to the old group of houses:—they will become as interesting as a missal illumination if you only look carefully enough to see how Prout varied those twenty-seven black holes, so that literally not one of them shall be like another. The grand old Comasque builder of the twelfth century arches below (the whole school of Lombardic masonry being originally Comasque[1]) varied them to his hand enough in height and width; but he invents a new tiny picture in chiaroscuro to put under every arch, and then knits all together with the central boats;—literally knits, for you see the mast of one of them catches up the cross-stick—stitch we might call it—that the clothes hung on between the balconies; and then the little figures on the left catch up the pillars like meshes in basket-work; and then the white awning of the boat on the left repeats the mass of wall, taking the stiffness out of it; while the reflections of arches, with the other figures, and the near black freights, carry all the best of it, broken and rippling, to the hither[2] shore.

[1] [Compare Plate 5 (of an arch in the Broletto at Como) in Vol. X.; and for remarks on the Comasque buildings as typical of the Lombardic school, see *ibid.*, pp. 131, 174, 394.]

[2] [So in the MS.; "bitter" in all previous editions—an obvious misprint.]

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## Como

From the drawing in the possession of Mr. Kennedy

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39. But the drawing of the Coliseum at Rome, No. 71, has still higher claim to our consideration; in it were reserved, and in all points, rarer powers of expressing magnitude and solitude. It is so majestic in manner that it would quite have borne being set beside the photograph of Turner's drawing at Farnley[1]—had it been fair to match mere outline against a finished composition. For Prout was, and he remains, the only one of our artists who entirely shared Turner's sense of magnitude, as the sign of past human effort or of natural force; and I must be so far tedious as to explain this metaphysical point at some length.[2] Of all forms of artistic susceptibility, reverent perception of true * magnitude is the rarest. No general conclusion has become more clear to my experience than this —strange as it may seem at first statement—that a painter's mind, *typically*, recognizes no charm in physical vastness; and will, if it must choose between two evils, by preference work on a reduced rather than an enlarged scale—and for subject, paint miniature rather than mass. Human form is always given by the great masters either of the natural size, or somewhat less (unless under fixed conditions of distance which require perspective enlargement), and no sort or shadow of pleasure is ever taken by the strongest designers in bulk of matter. Veronese never paints shafts of pillars more than two feet in diameter or thereabouts, and only from fifteen to twenty feet in height. Titian's beech trunks in the Peter Martyr[3] were not a foot across at the thickest, while his mountains are merely blue spaces of

* Reckless accumulation of *false* magnitude—as by John Martin—is merely a vulgar weakness of brain, allied to nightmare; so also the colossal works of decadent states in sculpture and architecture, which are always insolent, not reverent.[4]

[1] [A large drawing, 16 in. × 12, made between 1803–1820; still at Farnley.]

[2] [On this point see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 177), and the additional passage from the MS. (*ibid.*, pp. 433–436, where other references are given); see also *Aratra Pentelici*, § 145.]

[3] [For this picture, now destroyed, see Vol. III. p. 28 *n.*, and compare p. 74, above.]

[4] [For other references to the work of Martin, see Vol. I. p. 243; Vol. III. pp. 36, 38.]

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graceful shape, and are never accurately enough drawn to give even a suggestion of scale. And in the entire range of Venetian marine painting there is not one large wave.

40. Among our own recent landscape painters, while occasionally great feeling is shown for space, or mystery, there is none for essential magnitude. Stanfield was just as happy in drawing the East Cliff at Hastings as the Rock of Ischia;[1] and painted the little sandy jut of crag far better than the coned volcano. Fielding asked for no more stupendous summits than those of Saddleback or Wrynose; and never attempted the grandeur even of Yorkshire scars, finding their articulated geology troublesome. Sometimes David Roberts made a praiseworthy effort to explain the size of a pillar at Thebes, or a tower in the Alhambra; but only in cases where the character of largeness had been forced upon his attention as the quality to be observed by himself, and recommended to the observation of others. He never felt, or would have tried to make any one else feel, the weight of an ordinary boulder stone, or the hollow of an old chestnut stem, or the height of a gathering thunder-cloud. In the real apprehension of measurable magnitude, magnitude in things clearly seen—stones, trees, clouds, or towers—Turner and Prout stand—they two—absolutely side by side—otherwise companionless.

41. *Measurable* magnitude, observe—and therefore wonderful. If you can't see the difference between the domes of the National Gallery and of St. Paul's—much more if you can't see the difference between Shanklin Chine and the Via Mala (and most people can't!)—you will never care either for Turner or Prout; nor can you care rightly for them unless you have an intellectual pleasure in construction, and know and feel that it is more difficult to build a tower securely four hundred feet high than forty—and that the pillar of cloud above the crater of Etna, standing two thousand feet forth from the lips of it, means a natural

[1] [See *Academy Notes*, 1859, p. 224 of this volume.]

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force greater than the puff of a railway boiler. The quiet and calm feeling of reverence for this kind of power, and the accurate habit of rendering it (see notes on the sketches of Strasburg, No. 10, and Drachenfels, No. 28), are always connected, so far as I have observed, with some parallel justice in the estimate of spiritual order and power in human life and its laws; nor is there any faculty of my own mind—among those to which I owe whatever useful results it may have reached—of which I am so gratefully conscious.[1]

42. There is one further point—and if my preface has hitherto been too garrulous, it must be grave in notice of this at the close—in which Turner, Bewick, Hunt,[2] and Prout, all four agree,—that they can draw the poor, but not the rich. They acknowledge with affection, whether for principal or accessory subjects of their art, the British farmer, the British sailor,* the British market-woman, and

* Including, of course, the British soldier; but for Turner, a ship of the line was pictorially better material than a field battery, else he would just as gladly have painted Albuera as Trafalgar. I am intensely anxious, by the way, to find out where a small picture of his greatest time may now be dwelling,—a stranded English frigate engaging the batteries on the French coast at sunset (she got off at the flood-tide in the morning).[3] I want to get it, if possible, for the St. George's Museum at Sheffield. For the rest, I think the British gentleman may partly see his way to the answer of the above question if he will faithfully consider with himself how it comes to pass that, always fearless in the field, he is cowardly in the House,—and always generous in the field, is yet meanly cunning, and —too often—malignant, in the House.

[1] [Ruskin alludes again to this faculty of his mind in *Præterita*, i. ch. vi. § 136, and in the Preface (§ 9) to the 1883 reprint of vol. ii. of *Modern Painters* (Vol. IV. p. 8).]

[2] ["Hunt was not insensible to his want of power to depict genteel life, nor wholly without regret that it should be so. His correspondence with an intimate friend contains the following lament: 'I do not wish it to be known what I had to do for Mr. R——, but have no other objection to tell you, only that I am ashamed to say that I broke down: it was to make a drawing of Mrs. R——. I think I could have made a nice drawing of her if she had been one of my tramp girls. I think her very beautiful.' 'I wish,' he says in another letter, 'I could get a very beautiful face to paint from, so that I might, by taking a long time, try if I could not, although I broke down with Mrs. R——, still do something that way. It is a different thing having a lady to sit, to a model that you pay and can have at your command at any time.'"—Roget's *History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, ii. 190.]

[3] [The editors have not been able to find any trace of this picture.]



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the British workman. They agree unanimously in ignoring the British gentleman. Let the British gentleman lay it to heart, and ask himself why.

The general answer is long, and manifold.[1] But, with respect to the separate work of Prout, there is a very precious piece of instruction in it, respecting national prosperity and policy, which may be gathered with a few glances.

You see how all his best pieces depend on figures either crowded in market-places, or pausing (lounging, it may be) in quiet streets,—you will not find, in the entire series of subjects here assembled from his hand, a single figure in a hurry! He ignores, you see, not only the British gentleman, but every necessary condition, nowadays, of British business!

Look again, and see if you can find a single figure exerting all its strength. A couple of men rolling a single cask, perhaps; here and there a woman with rather a large bundle on her head—any more athletic display than these, you seek in vain.

He ignores even the British boat-race — and British muscular divinity, and British muscular art.

His figures are all as quiet as the Cathedral of Chartres! "Because he could not make them move" — think you? Nay, not so. Some of them (that figure on the sands in the "Calais," for instance) you can scarcely think are standing still—but they all move quietly. The real reason is that *he* understood, and *we* do not, the meaning of the word "quiet."

43. He understood it, personally, and for himself: practically, and for others. Take this one fact—of his quiet dealings with men—and think over it. In his early days he had established a useful and steady connection with the country dealers—that is to say, with the leading printsellers in the county towns and principal watering-places. He supplied them with pretty drawings of understood size and

[1] [It is partly discussed above, p. 223.]

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price, which were nearly always in tranquil demand by the better class of customers. The understood size was about 10 inches by 14 or 15, and the fixed price six guineas. The dealer charged from seven to ten, according to the pleasantness of the drawing. I bought the "Venice," for instance, No. 55, from Mr. Hewitt of Leamington, for eight guineas.

The modern fashionable interest in what we suppose to be art, had just begun to show itself a few years before Prout's death; and he was frequently advised to raise his prices. But he never raised them a shilling to his old customers.*[1] They were supplied with all the drawings they wanted, at six guineas each—to the end. A very peaceful method of dealing, and under the true ancient laws ordained by Athena of the Agora,[2] and St. James of the Rialto.[3]

44. Athena, observe, of the Agora, or Market *Place;* and St. James of the Deep Stream, or Market *River*. The Angels of Honest Sale and Honest Porterage; such honest porterage being the true grandeur of the Grand Canal, and of all other canals, rivers, sounds, and seas that ever moved in wavering morris under the night. And the eternally electric light of the embankment of that Rialto stream was

* Nor greatly to his new ones. The drawings made for the Water-colour room were usually more elaborate, and, justly, a little higher in price; but my father bought the Lisieux, No. 13, off its walls, for eighteen guineas.

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[1] ["Mr. Alfred Fripp relates that on his first serving in 1850 on the Hanging Committee of the Society, with Prout and others, he was 'lectured' (not unkindly) by the veteran member on the sin of a young man's asking higher prices for his works, Prout citing his own early practice by way of example, when 'he was content with two-and-sixpence for his small drawings,' and delighted and surprised when Ackermann in the Strand 'raised his prices to five shillings.'"—Roget's *History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, i. 350 *n*. Some interesting particulars of Prout's prices in later years, supplementing what Ruskin says, will be found at p. 57 of vol. ii. of the same work.]

[2] [For "Athena of the Agora," and "Britannia of the Market," see *The Crown of Wild Olive*, § 73.]

[3] [The reference is to the inscription discovered by Ruskin on the Church of St. James of the Rialto: "Around this Temple let the merchant's law be just, his weights true, and his covenants faithful." See *St. Mark's Rest*, chs. iii. and viii.; *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 76; and *Arrows of the Chace* (1880), i. 245.]

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shed upon it by the Cross:—know you that for certain, you dwellers by high embanked and steamer-burdened Thames.

And learn from your poor wandering painter this lesson —for sum of the best he had to give you (it is the Alpha of the laws of true human life)—that no city is prosperous in the sight of Heaven, unless the peasant sells in its market; adding this lesson of Gentile Bellini's for the Omega — that no city is ever righteous in the sight of Heaven, unless the noble walks in its street.[1]

[1] [See, for this reference to Gentile Bellini, the *Guide to the Academy at Venice*, part i., *ad fin.*]

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# NOTES ON THE DRAWINGS

*For complete Index see page 449.*

## I.—PROUT

THE reader will find, ending this pamphlet, a continuous index to the whole collection of drawings, with references to the pages in which special notice has been taken of them. In this descriptive text I allow myself to pause in explanatory, or wander in discursive, statement, just as may seem to me most helpful to the student, or most likely to interest the general visitor.

I begin with the series of pencil drawings by Prout, which were my principal object in promoting this exhibition. Of these I have chosen seventy, all of high quality, and arranged so as to illustrate the outgoing course of an old-fashioned Continental tour,[1] beginning at Calais and ending at Rome. Following the order of these with attention, an intelligent observer may learn many things—not to his hurt.

Their dates, it will be noticed, are never given by the artist himself—except in the day; never the year—nor is there anything in the progress of Prout's skill, or in his changes of manner, the account of which need detain us long. From earliest boyhood to the day of his death he drew firmly, and never scrabbled or blurred. Not a single line or dot is ever laid without positive intention,* and the care needful to fulfil that intention. This is already a

* See the exception proving the rule, in a single line, in No. 12, there noted.

[1] [Compare Ruskin's similar arrangement in the case of Turner's sketches: Vol. XIII. p. 190.]



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consummate virtue. But the magnificent certainty and ease, united, which it enabled him to obtain, are only seen to the full in drawings of his middle time. Not in decrepitude, but in mistaken effort, for which, to my sorrow, I was partly myself answerable, he endeavoured in later journeys to make his sketches more accurate in detail of tracery and sculpture;[1] and they lost in feeling what they gained in technical exactness and elaboration. Of these later drawings only three are included in this series, 4, 8, and 17; their peculiar character will, however, be at once discernible.

His incipient work was distinguished by two specialities—the use of a grey washed tint with the pencil, a practice entirely abandoned in his great time (though he will always make notes of *colour* frankly); and the insisting on minor pieces of broken texture, in small stones, bricks, grass, or any little picturesque incidents, with loss of largeness and repose. The little study of the apse of Worms Cathedral (32), a most careful early drawing, shows these faults characteristically; the Prague (23) is as definite an example of his great central manner, and even Turner's outline is not more faultless, though more complete. For the rest, Turner himself shared in the earlier weakness of more sharply dotted and sprinkled black touches, and practised, contemporaneously, the wash of grey tint with the pencil. The chief use of the method to the young student is in its compelling him to divide his masses clearly; and I used it much myself in early sketches, such as that of the Aventine, No. 104*a*,[2] for mere cleanliness and comfort in security of shadow—rather than the always rubbing and vanishing blacklead. But it is an entirely restricted method, and must be abandoned in all advanced study, and the pencil used alone, both for shade and line, until the finer gradations of shadow are understood. *Then* colour may be used with the pencil

[1] [The reference is to a passage in the first volume of *Modern Painters* (1st and 2nd eds. only), where Ruskin complained that for the delicate detail of Venetian architecture, Prout gave only "five straight strokes of a reed pen" (Vol. III. p. 256, and compare *ibid.*, p. 662).]

[2] [This is the drawing of 1841, reproduced opposite p. 454 in Vol. I.]

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for notation, and every power at once is in the workman's hands. The two first studies in our series are perfect instances of this conclusive method.*

There were more reasons, and better ones, than the students of to-day would suppose, for his not adopting it oftener. The subjects in Cornwall and Derbyshire by which his mind was first formed, were most of them wholly discouraging in colour, if not gloomy or offensive. Grey blocks of whinstone, black timbers, and broken walls of clay needed no iridescent illustration; the heath and stonecrop were beyond his skill, and, had he painted them with the staunchest efforts, would not have been translatable into the coarse lithographs for Ackermann's drawing-books, the publication of which was at that time a principal source of income to him.[1] His richer Continental subjects of later times were often quite as independent of colour, and in nearly every case taken under circumstances rendering its imitation impossible. He might be permitted by indulgent police to stop a thoroughfare for an hour or two with a crowd of admirers, but by no means to settle himself in a comfortable tent upon the pavement for a couple of months, or set up a gipsy encampment of pots and easel in the middle of the market-place. Also, his constitution, as delicate as it was sanguine,[2] admitted indeed of his sitting without harm for half-an-hour in a shady lane, or basking for part of the

* For further notes on the methods of shade proper to the great masters, the reader may consult the third and fourth numbers of my *Laws of Fésole*.[3]

[1] [Prout's work is divided into two clearly-defined periods. In the first, he drew only English scenery. In 1819 he made his first tour on the Continent, and thenceforward devoted himself almost entirely to foreign subjects. The first of "Ackermann's drawing-books," referred to in the text, was entitled *Rudiments of Landscape, in Progressive Studies. Drawn and etched in imitation of chalk, by Samuel Prout.* London, R. Ackermann, 101 Strand, 1813. Other volumes of a similar kind were published at various dates between 1819 and 1821. Many of Prout's foreign drawings were also published by Ackermann.]

[2] [Prout suffered from a pulmonary affection. Some of his familiar letters are eloquent alike of his sufferings and of his cheerfulness: see Roget's *History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, ii. 55–59.]

[3] [By the "numbers" Ruskin refers to the parts in which the *Laws of Fésole* originally appeared. See ch. x. of the work as it now stands.]

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forenoon in a sunny piazza, but would have broken down at once under the continuous strain necessary to paint a picture in the open air. And under these conditions the wonder is only how he did so much that was attentive and true, and that even his most conventional water-colours are so refined in light and shade that even the slightest become almost majestic when engraved.

1. CALAIS TOWN.

Sketch on the spot, of the best time and highest quality, —the clouds put in as they stood, the brig as she lay, the figures where they measure the space of sand, and give the look of busy desolateness, which poor Calais—crown jewel of England—had fallen to in our day, Prout's and mine. You see the size of the steam-packet of the period: you may trust Prout's measure of its magnitude, as aforesaid.[1] So also of belfry, lighthouse, and church,—very dear all to the old painter, as to me. I gave my own drawing of the lighthouse and belfry (No. 104, on the screen) to the author of *Rab and his Friends*, who has lent it me for comparison.* My drawing of the church spire is lost to me, but somewhere about in the world, I hope, and perhaps may be yet got hold of, and kept with this drawing, for memory of old Calais, and illustration of what was meant by the opening passage of the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*. (Appendix II.)[2]

Take the lens† to the gate of the tower (above the

* It was exhibited here last year, but is shown again for proof of Prout's fidelity in distant form.[3]

† For proper study of any good work in painting or drawing the student should always have in his hand a magnifying-glass of moderate power, from two to three inches in diameter.

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[1] [Above, p. 400.]

[2] [See below, p. 448 *n*. Compare also *Præterita*, ii. ch. x. § 186, where Prout's drawing is referred to as "a little idealizing" the belfry.]

[3] [For Dr. John Brown, see above, p. 359 *n*. The drawing has been lent for reproduction here by Dr. Brown's son; that of the church spire has not been found.]

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Calais

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**Calais: Lighthouse and Belfry**
**(1842)**

From the drawing in the possession of [illegible] Brown, Esq.

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steamer) and see how, in such a little bit, the architecture is truly told. Compare Hogarth's "Gate of Calais."[1]

2. Calais Old Pier.

Turner's great subject;[2] but Turner's being earlier taken, while the English packet was still only a fast-sailing cutter —(steam unthought of!) A perfect gem of masterful study, and quiet feeling of the facts of eternal sea and shore.

The solemnly rendered mystery of the deep and far sea; the sway of the great waves entering over the bar at the harbour's mouth; the ebbing away of the sand at the angle of the pier; the heaping of it in hills against its nearer side,* and the way in which all is made huge, bleak, and wild by the deepest tone of the dark sail and figure, are all efforts of the highest art faculty, which we cannot too much honour and thank.

3. Studies of French and Netherland Figures and Diligences.

Exemplary in the manner of abstract, and perfect in figure drawing, for *his* purposes. They are poor persons, you see — all of them. Not quite equal to Miss Kate Greenaway's in grace, nor to Mrs. Allingham's in face— (they, therefore, you observe, have mostly their backs to us). But both Miss Kate and Mrs. Allingham might do better duty to their day, and better honour to their art, if they would paint, as verily, some of these poor country people in far-away places, rather than the high-bred prettinesses, or fond imaginations, which are the best they have given us yet for antidote to the misery of London.[3]

* Compare the sentence respecting this same place, Appendix II., "surfy sand, and hillocked shore."[4]

[1] [Now in the National Gallery. No. 1464.]
[2] [For Turner's various representations of it, see Vol. XII. p. 380.]
[3] [For Mrs. Allingham, see above, p. 264; and see *The Art of England*, Lecture iv. ("Fairyland: Mrs. Allingham and Kate Greenaway.").]
[4] [For the reference, see below, p. 448 *n.*]

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4. ABBEVILLE: CHURCH OF ST. WULFRAN.[1]

Seen from the west, over old houses (since destroyed). Of the artist's best time and manner. See Preface, p. 395.

5. ABBEVILLE: CHURCH OF ST. WULFRAN—THE NORTH-WESTERN TOWER, WITH OLD HOUSES.

Elaborate. Of the late time, but not in the highest degree good — the chiaroscuro of the pinnacles evidently caught on the spot, but not carried through the drawing rightly, and the whole much mannered. Precious, however, for all that.

6. PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PORCHES OF ST. WULFRAN, ABBEVILLE.

7. AMIENS.

One of the best of the best time. See Preface, p. 392, and compare the extract from *Modern Painters*, given in Appendix III.[2]

8. CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN ST. JACQUES, DIEPPE.

One of the best studies of the last period. See further notes on it under the number 17 [p. 417].

9. EVREUX.

Perfect sketch of the best time, and most notable for the exquisite grace of proportion in its wooden belfry.[3] No

[1] [For this church, see *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 165); Vol. XII. p. 92 *n.*; and *Præterita*, i. ch. ix. §§ 179, 181.]

[2] [For the reference, see below, p. 448 *n.*]

[3] ["My best joys were in small pieces of provincial building, full of character, and naturally graceful and right in their given manner. In this kind the little wooden belfry of Evreux, of which Prout's drawing is photographed in my Memoir, is consummate."—*Præterita*, ii. ch. x. § 186. The "Memoir" is the illustrated edition (1880) of these Notes.]

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Evreux

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architect, however accurate in his measurements—no artist, however sensitive in his admiration—ever gave the proportion and grace of Gothic spires and towers with the loving fidelity that Prout did. This is much to say, and therefore I say it again deliberately—there are no existing true records of the real effect of Gothic towers and spires, except only Prout's. And now I must be tedious awhile, and explain what I mean in saying this—being much—and show it to be true. Observe, first — everything in grace of form depends on truth of scale. You don't show how graceful a thing is, till you show how large it is; for all grace means ultimately the use of strength in the right way, moral and physical against a given force. A swan no bigger than a butterfly would not be graceful; its grace is in its proportion to the waves, and power over them. A butterfly as large as a swan would not be graceful; its beauty is in being so small that the winds play with it, but do not vex it. A hollow traceried spire fifteen feet high would be effeminate and frivolous, for it would be stronger solid; a hollow traceried spire five hundred feet high is beautiful, for it is safer so, and the burden of the builder's toil spared. All wisdom, economy, beauty, and holiness are one; harmonious throughout—in all places, times, and things: understand any one of their orders, and do it; it will lead you to another—to all others, in time.

Now, therefore, think why this spire of Evreux is graceful. If it were only silver filigree over a salt-cellar, it would still be pretty (for it is beautifully varied and arranged). But not "graceful" (or full of grace). The reason is that it is built, not with silver, but with aspen logs; and because there has been brought a strange refinement and melody, as of chiming in tune, and virtue of uprightness, and precision of pointedness, into the aspen logs, which nobody could ever have believed it *was* in a log to receive. And it is graceful also, because it is evidently playful and bright in temper. There are no labouring logs visible—no propping, or thrusting, or bearing logs—no mass of enduring and

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afflicted timber; only imaginative timber, aspiring just high enough for praise, not for ambition. Twice as high as it ever could have stood in a tree—by honour of men done to it; but not so high as to strain its strength, and make it weak among the winds, or perilous to the people.

### 10. Strasburg: The Cathedral Spire.

I have put this drawing—quite one of the noblest in all the series—out of its geographical place, and beside the Evreux, that you may compare the qualities of grace in wooden and stone buildings; and follow out our begun reasoning further.

Examine, first, how the height is told. Conscientiously, to begin with. He had not room enough on his paper (perhaps), and put the top at the side rather than blunt or diminish the least bit. I say "perhaps," because, with most people, that would have been the way of it; but my own private opinion is, that *he* never meant to have room on his paper for it—that he felt instinctively that it was grander to have it going up nobody knew where—only that he could not draw it so for the public, and must have the top handy to put on afterwards.

Conscientiously, first, the height is told; next, artfully. He chooses his place just where you can see the principal porch at the end of the street—takes care, by every artifice of perspective and a little exaggeration of aerial tone, to make you feel how far off it is; then carries it up into the clearer air. Of course, if you don't notice the distant porch, or are not in the habit of measuring the size of one part of a thing by another, you will not feel it here—but neither would you have felt it there, at Strasburg itself.

Next, for composition. If you ever read my last year's notes on Turner, you must remember how often I had to dwell on his way of conquering any objectionable character in his main subject by putting more of the same character

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Strassburg

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in something else, where it was *not* objectionable.[1] Now it happens to be one of the chief faults of Strasburg Spire (and it has many, for all the reputation of it), to be far too much constituted of meagre upright lines (see the angle staircases, and process of their receding at the top, and the vertical shafts across the window at its base). Prout instantly felt, as he drew the tower, that left to itself it would be too iron-like and stiff. He does not disguise this character in the least, but conquers it utterly by insisting with all his might on the flutings of the pilasters of the near well. "How ill drawn these!" you say. Yes; but he hates these, in themselves, and does not care how badly he draws them, so only that by their ugly help he can save the Cathedral. Which they completely do—taking all the stiffness out of it, and leaving it majestic. Next, he uses contrast to foil its beauty, as he has used repetition to mask its faults. In the "Abbeville," No. 4, he had a beautiful bit of rustic white wall to set off his towers with. Here, in Strasburg, half modernized, alas! even in his time, he finds nothing better than the great ugly white house behind the lamp. In old times, remember, a series of gables like that of the last house would have gone all down the street. (Compare the effect in "Strasburg," No. 11, all contemporary.) Prout will not do any "restoration"—he knows better; but he could easily have disguised this white house with cast shadows across the street, and some blinds and carpets at the windows. But the white, vulgar mass shall not be so hidden, and the richness of all the old work shall gain fulness out of the modern emptiness, and modesty out of the modern impudence.

Pre-eminently the gain is to the dear old gabled house on the right, which is the real subject of the drawing, being a true Strasburg dwelling-house of the great times.[2] But before speaking more of this I must ask you to look at the next subject.

[1] [See Vol. XIII. pp. 427, 530.]

[2] [For other notes on this drawing, see *Eagle's Nest*, § 86; and *Catalogue of the Educational Series*, Nos. 59 and 60.]

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12. Old Street in Lisieux.

This, though it contains so much work, is a hurried and fatigued drawing—fatigued itself in a sense, as having more touches put on it than were good for it; and the sign of fatigue in the master, or perhaps rather of passing illness, for he seems never to have been tired in the ordinary way. The unusually confused and inarticulate figures, the more or less wriggled and ill-drawn draperies, and the unfinished foundation of the house on the right, where actually there is a line crossing another unintentionally! are all most singular with him; and I fancy he must have come on this subject at the end of a sickly-minded day, and yet felt that he must do all he could for it, and then broken down.

He has resolved to do it justice, at least in the drawing No. 18, one of the best in the room; but there are characters in the subject itself which, without his quite knowing why, cramped him, and kept several of his finer powers from coming into play.

Note, first, essentially he is a draughtsman of stone, not wood, and a tree-trunk is always wholly beyond his faculty; so that, when everything is wooden, as here, he has to translate his stony manner for it all through, and is as if speaking a foreign language. In the finished drawing, one scarcely knows whether the near doorway *is* stone or wood.

And there was one character, I repeat, in this subject that specially strained this weak part of him. When a wooden house is in properly wooden style, he can always do it, as at Abbeville and Strasburg. But this street at Lisieux is a wooden street in stone style. I feel even tempted to write fine scientific modern English about it, and say it is objectively lignologic and subjectively petrologic.[1] The crossing beams of the wall-courses, and king-posts of the gables in dormer windows, are indeed properly

[1] [For Ruskin's dislike of the words "objective" and "subjective," see Vol. V. p. 203 *n.*, Vol. VI. p. 482.]

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expressive of timber structure; but all the sculpture is imitative of the forms developed in the stone traceries of the same period—seen perfectly in the elaborate drawing, No. 13.

Those traceries were themselves reciprocally corrupted, as we shall see presently, by the woodwork practised all round them; but both the Burgundian and Norman later Gothic were corrupted by their own luxurious laziness, before they took any infection from the forest. Instead of building a real pointed arch, they merely put a cross lintel with a nick in it* (*a*), then softened the nick-edges and ran a line of moulding round it (*b*), and then ran up a flourish above to show what a clever thing they had done (*c*),—and there you are. But there is much more curious interest in this form of wooden imitative architecture than any mere matter of structural propriety.

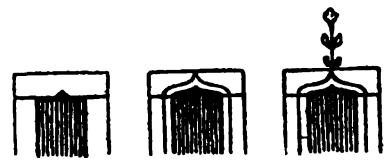

Fig. 2

Please compare the Lisieux houses in No. 12 with the house on the right at Strasburg in No. 10. You see there are no pinnacles nor crockets imitated there. All is sternly square—upright timber and cross timber—cut into what ornamental current mouldings the workman knew.

And yet you see the Cathedral at the side is eminently gabled and pinnacular! Run your eye from the square window of the second storey of the house (third from ground) along to the Cathedral gabled tracery. Could any two styles be more adverse? While, on the contrary, the Lisieux street is merely a "changing the willow wreaths to stone"[1]—in imitation of the chapel of St. Jacques [No. 8]? It is true,

* *Without* the nick, mind you, it would have been a grand building—pure Greek or pure Tuscan, and capable of boundless good. It is the Nicolaitane nick that's the devil.[2]

[1] [*The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, canto ii. st. 11.]

[2] ["But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."—Rev. ii. 6.]

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the Lisieux street is contemporary with St. Jacques, and the Strasburg house a century or so later than the Cathedral; but that is not the reason of the opposition. Had they been either pure French or pure German the two would have declined together and have died together. But in France of the fifteenth century, church, noblesse, and people were one body, and the people in Lisieux loved and delighted in their clergy and nobles, as the Venetians did,—

"Pontifices, clerus, populus, dux mente serenus."[1]

But Strasburg is on the edge—nay, on the Pole—of all divisions. Virtually, from west to east, between Dijon and Berne; virtually, from north to south, between Cologne and Basle: virtually, if you have eyes, the Diet of Worms is in it, the Council of Constance is in it, the Battle of Sempach is there, and the rout of Granson.[2]

That is a Swiss cottage, with all ecclesiastical and feudal powers flaming up into the sky at the side of it, and the iron lances and lines of them are as lace round the "Commerce de Jean Dichl."[3] "Commerce," a grand word, which we suppose ourselves here to understand; an entirely vile one, if misunderstood. Human commerce, a business for men and angels; but inhuman, for apes and spectres.[4] We must look at a few more street scenes in order to find out which sort Jean Dichl's belongs to.

### 14. Bayeux.

A small sketch, but first-rate, and with half a mile of street in it. Pure and plain woodwork this, with prop and

[1] [The inscription on a mosaic in St. Mark's: see *St. Mark's Rest*, § 113. A water-colour drawing of this mosaic is in the Ruskin Museum at Sheffield.]

[2] [The Council of Constance (1414–1418); because that gathering under the Emperor Sigismund was an assertion of the imperial power, and Strassburg was an imperial city. The Diet of Worms (1521), because the Reformation found ready acceptance at Strassburg. The battles of Sempach (1386) and Granson (1476), because Strassburg was in friendly relations with the Swiss confederates and in the latter struggle rendered them efficient aid.]

[3] [The inscription seen over the shop in the drawing described.]

[4] [Compare *Munera Pulveris*, ch. iv. ("Commerce").]

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buttress of stumpy stone—healthy all, and sound. Note especially the strong look of foundation, as opposed to the modern style of house-front in most commercial quarters,—five storeys of brick wall standing on the edge of a pane of plate-glass.

15. Tours.

The saints presiding over an old-clothes shop, apparently;—but it may be the fashionable draper's of the quarter. I merely give it as an example of the developed form of bracket, the end of the cross timber becoming a niche, and the prop a saint—not without meaning. Much more strength than is really wanted allowed in the backing, so that these corrugated saints do not by their recessed niches really weaken the structure. Compare photograph No. 117.

16. Rouen: The Butter-Tower.[1]

Built with the octroi on butter—not a right way, be it spoken, in passing. All taxes on food of any sort, or drink of any sort, are wrong, whether to build a pious tower, or support an impious government.[2]

A tired sketch,—the house on the left, one of the most beautiful in France, hurried and ill done.

17. Rouen: Staircase in St. Maclou.

Almost unique in the elaboration of the texture in marble pillar, and effect of distant light, showing what he was capable of in this kind: compare "St. Jacques," No. 8, where he gets flickering sunlight through painted glass. There the effect is pathetic and expressive; but both texture and

[1] [See Vol. II. pp. 400, 432, for Ruskin's early sketches, in Prout's manner, of this tower.]

[2] [Ruskin was an advocate of direct as opposed to indirect taxation, and especially of graduated taxes on income and property. See Vol. XII. pp. 594–597, and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 7.]



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effect of light were mistakes in St. Maclou: it does not in the least matter to the staircase whether the pillar is smooth or the window bright. In earlier times he would have merely indicated the forms of both, and given his time to gather groups of figures following the circular sweep of the staircase.

18. GHENT.

Having run south now as far as I care, we will turn back, please, to go through the Netherlands into Germany. Pretty nearly *all* the Netherlands are in this and the following drawing. Boats beside houses; the boats heavily practical, the houses heavily fanciful, but both accurate and perfect in their way—work of a great, though fen-witted, people. The Ghent scene is the very cream of Prout—all that he could best do in his happiest times; his Cornish and Hastings boat-study standing him in thorough stead *here*, though it will fail him at Venice, as we shall sadly see.

19. ANTWERP.

Altogether magnificent: the noble street scene, requiring no effort to exalt, no artifice to conceal, a single feature in it. Pure fact—the stately houses, and the simple market, and the divine tower. You would like advertisements all along the house-fronts instead—wouldn't you? and notices of sale, at a ruinous sacrifice, in the shop-windows—wouldn't you? and a tramway up the street, and a railway under it, and a gasometer at the end of it, instead of a cathedral—now wouldn't you?

21. BRUNSWICK.

Dainty still; a most lovely drawing. I didn't find anything so good in the town myself, but was not there until 1859,[1] when, I suppose, all the best of it had been knocked

[1] [For a reference to the author's visit there, see *Ethics of the Dust*, § 90.]

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**Antwerp**

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down. The Stadthaus (see lithograph, No. 93) is unique in the support of its traceries on light transverse arches; but this innovation, like nearly all German specialities in Gothic, is grotesque, and affected without being ingenious.

22. DRESDEN.

An exquisite drawing, and most curious in the entire conquest and calming down of Prout's usual broken touch into Renaissance smoothness. It is the best existing representation of the old town, and readers of "Friedrich" may care to know what it was like.

23. PRAGUE: ENTRANCE OVER THE BRIDGE.

A drawing already noticed, of the highest quality. The lithograph, No. 91, of the other side of the tower on the right, enables us to walk back the other way; it is quite one of the best drawings in the book.

24. PRAGUE: THE STADTHAUS.

Both lovely, and essentially Proutesque, as a drawing. Architecturally, one of the prettiest possible examples of fourteenth-century Gothic. The town was all, more or less, like that once; the houses beyond have, I suppose, been built even since the siege.[1]

25. BAMBERG.

I include this drawing in our series, first for its lovely crowd of figures; and secondly, to show that Prout never attempts to make anything picturesque that naturally isn't. Domo d'Ossola and Bologna (47 and 65) are picturesque—in the drawings, because they are so in reality—and heavy Bamberg remains as dull as it pleases to be. This strict honesty of Prout's has never been rightly understood, because he didn't often draw dull things, and gleaned the

[1] [The siege by Frederick the Great in 1757.]

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picturesque ones out of every hole and corner; so that everybody used to think it was he who had made them picturesque. But, as aforesaid, he is really as true as a mirror.[1]

### 26. Nuremberg: The Frauen Kirche.

Of the best time, and certainly the fullest expression ever given of the character of the church. But the composition puzzled him, the house-corner on the left coming in too abruptly, and the sketch falls short of his best qualities. He gets fatigued with the richness in excess over so large a mass, and feels that nothing of foreground will carry it out in harmony.

### 28. The Drachenfels.

When I said that Turner and Prout stood by themselves in power of rendering magnitude,[2] I don't mean on the same level, of course, but in perfect sympathy; and Turner himself would have looked with more than admiration—with real respect—at this quiet little study. I have never seen any other picture or drawing which gave so intensely the main truths of the breadth and prolonged distances of the great river, and the scale and standing of the rock, as compared with the buildings, and woods at its feet.

The "standing" of the rock, I say especially; for it is in great part by the perfect sculpture and build of its buttresses (the "articulation" which, I have just said,[3] Fielding shunned as too troublesome) that the effect, or rather information, of magnitude is given.

And next to this rock drawing, the clear houses and trees, and exquisite little boat—examined well—complete the story of mountain power by their intense reality. Take the lens to them—there is no true enjoyment to be had without attention, either from pictures, or the truth itself.

[1] [See above, p. 397.]
[2] [See above, p. 399.]
[3] [See above, p. 400.]

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29. Islands on the Rhine.

First, the power of the Dragon rock; then of the noble river. It seems to have been an especially interesting scene this, to good painters. One of the most elaborate pieces of drawing ever executed by Turner was from this spot.[1]

30. The Pfalz.[2]

Hurried a little, and too black in distance; but I include it in the series for a most interesting bit of composition in it. The building, from this point of view, had a disagreeable look of a church tower surrounded by pepper-boxes. He brings it into a mass, and makes a fortress of it, by the shadow on the mountain to the right of the tower, almost as dark as a bit of roof.

32. Worms.

An early drawing—the only one included in this series—is to be compared with the careful water-colour, No. 31.

33. See under No. 37.

35. Ulm.

A beautiful drawing of one of the most interesting street fountains in Germany. It is given in this sketch, as usual, with entire care and feeling of its proportion. The water-colour drawing, No. 36, shows the little interest he took in copying for the exhibition, knowing that the British mind was not to be impressed by proportion, and only cared for getting things into their frames. The lithograph, No. 90, is, on the contrary, one of his most careful works, and quite true to the place, when I saw it in 1835.[3] I suppose it is

[1] [For Turner's Rhine drawings, see Vol. XII. p. 377.]
[2] [On the Rhine, above Caub, on a ledge of rock in the middle of the river, stands the Pfalz or Pfalzgrafenstein, a small hexagonal building with turrets.]
[3] [For a sketch of Ulm, made by Ruskin in that year, see Plate 1 in Vol. I. (p. 8).]

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all pulled down, and made an "esplanade" of by this time. (See passage from *Seven Lamps* in Appendix I.[1])

**37 and 38. Swiss and German Costumes.**

I never can understand how these groups are ever designed—or caught, and how they are built up, one by one. No painter who can do it ever tells us how.

**39. Chillon.**

The only drawing I ever saw which gave the real relation of the castle to the size of the mountains behind it.

**40. The Dungeon of Chillon.**

I must leave the reader now to make what he may of this, and the following drawings as far as 47. All of them, to people who know the old look of the places, will be interesting; but I have no time to enlarge on them.

**41. Montreux.**

**42. Waterfall under the Dent du Midi, in the Rhone Valley.**

**43. Village of Martigny.**

**46. Brieg.**

**47. Domo d'Ossola.**

One of the most exemplary in the room, for intense fidelity to the place, and lovely composition of living groups. Note the value of the upright figure in the balcony on the left, in breaking up and enriching the mass, and joining it with the rest.

[1] [For the reference see below, p. 448 n.]

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Domo d'Ossola

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The Monument of Can Signorio della Scala: at Verona

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48. Como.

Enough dwelt on in the preface, p. 398.

49. The Monument of Can Signorio della Scala: at Verona.[1]

Note that the low sarcophagus on the left, of much finer time than the richer tomb, has on its side a bas-relief representing the Madonna enthroned between two angels; a third angel presents to her the dead knight's soul, kneeling.

50. The large drawing of the subject, No. 50, has lost all these particulars. Was it all Prout's fault, shall we say? Was there any one, in his time, of English travellers, who would have thanked him for a Madonna and a dead old Scaliger, done ever so clearly?

56. Venice: Ducal Palace from the West.

57. Venice: Ducal Palace from the East.

58. St. Michael's Mount, Normandy.

I have put No. 58 in this eccentric manner, after the Ducal Palace, that the reader may feel, for good and all, Prout's intense appreciation of local character—his gaiety with the gay, and his strength with the strong. Cornish-bred, his own heart is indeed in the rocks, and towers, and sands of the fraternal Norman shore;[2] and it fails him in Venice, where the conditions alike of her masquing and her majesty were utterly strange to him. Still, the sense of light, and motion, and splendour above the Riva dei Schiavoni, and of gloom, and iron-fastness, and poverty,

[1] [With Prout's drawing, here reproduced, compare Ruskin's, Plate B in Vol. XI. (p. 90). Prout's of the Ducal Palace (see next page) may similarly be compared with Ruskin's in Vol. IV. (p. 306).]

[2] [See Vol. XII. pp. 308, 362.]

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midst the silent sands of Avranches, are rendered by the mirror of him, as if you had but turned its face from sun to shade.

The St. Michael's is an entirely grand drawing. The St. Raphael's—for that is indeed the other name of the Ducal Palace*—on this side, has many faults; but is yet, out and out, the best Ducal Palace that has yet been done. It is not an architectural drawing—does not in the least pretend to be. No one had ever drawn the traceries of the Ducal Palace till I did it myself. Canaletti, in his way, is just as false as Prout; Turner no better.[1] Not one of them painted anything but their general impressions; and not a soul in England knew that there was a system in Venetian architecture at all, until I made the measured (to half and quarter inches) elevation of it (No. 105), and gave the analysis of its tracery mouldings and their development, from those of the Franciscans at the Frari (*Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. vii.). This study of Prout's, then, I repeat, does not pretend to architectural accuracy; and it has even one very considerable fault. Prout's mind had been so formed among buildings solid at the base, and aerial at the top, that he not only could not enjoy, he could not even *see*, the national audacity of the great builder of the Ducal Palace, in supporting its wall on, virtually, two rows of marble piles;[2] and, at the farther end, just where the shafts at the angle let the winds blow through them as frankly

* The angel Michael is the angle statue on the south-west (seen in No. 56), with the inscription, "With my sword I guard the good, and cleanse the evil." The angel Raphael holds in his hands the nations' prayer to him: "Raphael, the dreadful ('reverende'), make thou the deep quiet, we beseech thee."[3]

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[1] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. pp. 255, 256), for the deficiencies of Canaletto and Prout in this matter; and for Turner's, Vol. XIII. pp. 159, 210, 499. The drawing by Ruskin here referred to is given as Plate 9 in Vol. IV. p. 306, and *cf.* p. 1. For his drawing of the Frari traceries, see Plate A in Vol. IX. p. xxiv.; and for his detailed work at Venice generally, see Vol. IX. pp. xxv.–xxvi., Vol. XI. p. xxii.]

[2] [See *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. pp. 357–358), and Plate H in that volume.]

[3] [See further on these inscriptions, *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 364 and *n.*).]

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X. X

C. Prout

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as the timbers of Calais pier,* he blackens them all up inside, as if the backing wall were solid and the arches were only niches.

For all that, there never was anything so true to the general splendour and life of the Palace done before, nor ever will be again.†

And in the great drawing (No. 60), lent by Lord Coleridge, the upper storey is singularly and gracefully accurate in the pinnacled Gothic of its central window, and in the various elevations and magnitudes of the rest. The two upper windows in the shade at the nearest angle are the oldest portions of the Palace visible, and Prout has carefully noted their different curve. The bright and busy figures are true to old times only.

There are two points—technical both and spiritual both—which the reader must note in this drawing.

The first, how thankful Prout is for the clusters of doves along the upper line of the cornice. "They might as well be jackdaws," you think? Well, as aforesaid, Prout is not

* The real and marvellous structure of the angle is admirably shown in the photograph, No. 106*a*, though the quantity of light penetrating the shafts is a little exaggerated in effect by uniting with the light sides of the shafts. Taking the lens to the photograph, you will see this line is destroyed by the modern gas-lamp stuck across the Italian sculpture; and you may admire at leisure the other improvements made by the art of the nineteenth century on the effect of the piazzetta—the combination of the fore and mizzen masts of the huge steamer, whose hull, with its boat, blocks out the whole lagoon, and of the upright *near* gas-lamp, with the pillar of St. Mark; the introduction of the steamer's painted funnel to form a foundation for the tower of San Giorgio; the bathing establishment anchored beyond the pillars, just where the Bucentaur used to lie close to the quay to receive the Doge; and, finally, the bills pasted on the sheds at the base of St. Mark's column, advising us of improving works of a liberal tone, such as the "Storia della Natura" and the "Misteri della Inquisizione di Spagna." In this same Loggia of Sansovino's, against which these sheds are built, the "Misteri" of the Government Lottery are also revealed weekly to the popular mind.[1]

† For the building is now being restored, and no man with a heart will ever draw the patched skeleton of it more.

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[1] [For another reference to the Lottery, see *St. Mark's Rest*, ch. ii.]

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a colourist, else he would have made his boats black and his doves grey; but then he would have been Carpaccio, and not Prout. This is really all you can expect him to do for a dove, with his poor Cumberland plumbago;—and, after all, the glory of the creatures is not in being pigeons, but in being Venetians. Swallow or sparrow, daw or dove, sea-gull by Achilles' isle or chough by Cornish cliff—that they are living with us by shore and altar, under cottage eaves and around palace council-chambers, that is their glory—and, if we knew it, our peace.

The other point is more definitely technical, yet has its lesson in other directions also. I have already again and again insisted on Prout's way of taking up his stitches, and carrying one part of his work into another. Look back to what is said of the Como in the preface (p. 398). He is no more content with his Ducal Palace till he has got it well into fugue with its crowd, than he was with these old houses by the harbour. He won't break the corner of its arcade, but just flutes, as it were, a single pillar with the mast of a boat, and then carries the mast down—stopping the arch-mouldings for it, observe, as he draws them, so deliberate is he, and, getting well down so to his figures, rivets the rent of the canal across with the standing one, just under Michael Steno's central window,[1] and then carries all away to the right, with the sitting figures and levelled sails in harmony with the courses of the Palace, and, to the left, with the boats. Hide one of these foundational forms with your hand, and see how the Palace goes to pieces! There are many compositions in the room more felicitous; but there is no other in which the opposite influence to the "little rift within the lute"[2]—the stitch in time that saves nine—is so delicately and so intensely illustrated as by the service of this single boat-spar to every shaft of the whole Ducal Palace.

With respect to these Venice drawings, there are two

[1] [See *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 346).]
[2] [Tennyson: *Vivien*.]

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St. Mark's Place, Venice

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**The St. Jean d'Acre Pillars, Venice**
(1877)

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metaphysical problems—in my own mind, of extreme insolubility—and on which I therefore do not enlarge: namely, why Prout, practical among all manner of Cornish and Kentish boats, could not for the life of him draw a gondola; and the second, why, not being able to draw a gondola, he yet never gave the grand Adriatic fishing-boat, with its coloured sail, instead. These, and other relative questions still more abstruse—as, for instance, why he could draw the domes of Dresden rightly, and yet made the Madonna della Salute look like the National Gallery or Bethlehem Hospital—I must for the present leave for the reader's own debate, and only at speed give some account of the points to be illustrated by the supplementary drawings.

People often ask me—and people who have been long at Venice too—of the subject No. 55, *where* those square pillars are, and what they are.[1] The corner of the Piazzetta from which this view is taken was once the sweetest of all sacred niches in that great marble withdrawing-room of the Piazzetta of St. Mark's. My old sketch, No. 107, shows approximately the colour of the marble walls and pavement of it, and the way the white flowers of the Greek pillars—purest Byzantine—shone through the dark spots of lichen. The daguerreotype, No. 108, taken under my own direction, gives the light and shade of them, chosen just where the western sunlight catches the edge of the cross at the base of the nearer one; and my study, No. 108*a*, shows more fully the character of the Byzantine chiselling—entirely free-hand, flinging the marble acanthus-leaves here and there as they would actually grow. It is *through* work of this kind that the divine Greek power of the days of Hesiod came down to animate the mosaic workers in St. Mark's in the eleventh century.

They worked under a Greek princess, of whom the reader will find some legend (though yet I have not been able to do more than begin her story) in ch. vii. of *St. Mark's*

[1] [For these "St. Jean d'Acre Columns," see Vol. IX. p. 105 *n.*]

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*Rest.** In ch. viii. I have given some account of the entire series of mosaics which were completed by her husband under the influence of his Greek queen (true *queen*, mind you, at that time, the Duke of Venice then wearing the king's diadem, not the republican cap); and I besought my readers at Venice and elsewhere to help me to get some faithful record of these mosaics before they perished by modern restoration.[1] I have never made a more earnest appeal for anything; and indeed I believe, had it been for a personal gift—another Splügen drawing,[2] or the like—I should have got it by this time easily enough. But there are always twenty people who will do what they feel to be kind, for one who will take my advice about an important public object. And—if they only knew it—the one real kindness they *can* show to me is in listening to me—understanding, in the first place, that I know my business better at sixty than I did at five-and-twenty; and in the second, that my happiness, such as yet remains to me, does not at all consist in the things about me in my own parlour, but in the thought that the principles I have taught are being acted upon, and the great buildings and great scenes I have tried to describe saved, so far as may yet be possible, from destruction and desecration. At this very hour the committees of Venetian builders are meeting to plot the total destruction, and re-erection according to their own notions, and for their own emolument, of the entire west front of

* My readers continually complain that they can't get my presently issuing books. There is not a bookseller in London, however, who is not perfectly well aware that the said books are always to be had by a postcard sent to my publisher, Mr. G. Allen, Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent, to whom subscriptions for the object stated in the text are to be sent (or the books may be had of the Fine Art Society).[3]

[1] [A note by Ruskin at § 132 of *St. Mark's Rest*. The circular referred to on the next page was distributed to visitors to the Old Water-Colour Society's Exhibition and to the Fine Art Society's Gallery. It was reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, i. 237–251, and is included in a later volume of this edition.]

[2] [See Vol. XIII. p. 487.]

[3] [Particulars of Ruskin's methods of publication at this time are given in a later volume of this edition. Mr. Allen opened an office in London in January 1890; Ruskin's books are now sold in the ordinary way.]

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St. Mark's—that which Barbarossa knelt under, and before which Dandolo took his vow for Palestine![1] And in the meantime the Christian populace of all Europe is quarrelling about their little parish reredoses and wax candles!*

And so it comes to pass that the floor of St. Mark's is already destroyed, together with the north and south sides; only the west front and roof mosaics are yet left, and these are instantly threatened. I have got an absolutely faithful and able artist, trained by Mr. Burne-Jones, to undertake the copying of the whole series of mosaics yet uninjured.[2] He is doing this for love and mere journeyman's wages—how carefully and thoroughly, the three examples in this room (114, 115, 116) will enough show; but he has been six months at work alone, unable to employ assistants, and all that I have yet got for him by the eagerest appeals I could make at Venice and here is—some hundred and thirty pounds, and half of that from a single personal friend.†

I will have a little circular drawn up, stating these and other relative facts clearly, before the close of the present exhibition. Before its opening, I can allow myself now little more than the mere explanation of what it contains.

And now I really haven't time to talk any more, and yet I've ever so much to say, if I could, of the following drawings at Arqua and Nuremberg, 67 and 70. I must at least say at once why these, like Venice and St. Michael's Mount, go side by side.

* It may perhaps not be quite too late to contradict a report that appeared in some Irish paper, that I had been lately in Dublin, giving some opinion or other about reredoses. I have not been in Ireland these ten years—never shall be in Ireland more[3]—and care no more about any modern churches or church furniture than about the drop-scene at Drury Lane—not so much indeed, if the truth were all told.

† £128, 15s. 6d., by report from Mr. Allen, of 12th November.

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[1] [See Vol. IX. p. 28 *n.*]

[2] [Mr. T. M. Rooke. Several of the drawings thus made for Ruskin are exhibited at the St. George's Museum at Sheffield: see a later volume of this edition.]

[3] [He had visited Ireland in 1868, when he gave the lecture on "The Mystery of Life and its Arts," afterwards added to *Sesame and Lilies*.]

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In the first place, I believe that the so-called Petrarch's house at Arqua (67)[1] can only be built on the site of the real one—it can't be of Petrarch's time; but the tomb is true: and just looking from that to the building of Dürer's house (70)—which is assuredly authentic—and of Rubens's, No. 81, what a quantity of the lives of the men we are told by these three slight sketches! One of the things I hope to do at Sheffield is to get a connected and systematic series of drawings of the houses and the tombs of great men.[2] The tombs, of course, generally tell more of their successors than of themselves; but the two together will be historical more than many volumes. Their houses, I say; yes, and the things they saw from their houses—quite the chief point with many of the best men and women. Casa Guidi windows,[3] often of much more import than Casa Guidi; and in this house of Albert, its own cross-timbers are little matter, but those Nuremberg walls around it are everything.

### 73. Kelso.

I now gather together as I best may the supplementary drawings which have come in since I arranged my series, and one or two others which did not properly belong to it. This one of Kelso is chiefly valuable as showing his mode of elementary study with washes of two tints—one warm, the other a little cooler. The system was afterwards expanded into his colour practice.

### 74. Entrance to North Transept of Rouen.

Unfinished, and extremely interesting, as showing his *method* of rubbing in the tint with the stump or his finger before adding the pencil lines.

[1] [See Ruskin's sketch of this house in *The Poetry of Architecture* (Vol. I. p. 108 and *n.*).]

[2] [This scheme, however, was not carried out.]

[3] [Ruskin was a great admirer of Mrs. Browning's poem. See *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 243 *n.*), and compare p. 83, above.]

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75. Study of Dutch Boats.

These boat sketches might be multiplied countlessly; and I would fain have given many and talked much of them, but have neither room nor time. Note in this the careful warping of the mast by the strain of the heavy sail.

76. Neudersdorf.
77. Gutenfels.

Two lovely Rhine realities, when the river was something better than a steam-tramway.

78. An old Rhine Bridge at Rheinfelden.

A favourite Turner subject, and drawn and engraved with great care in *Modern Painters*.[1] As a Prout, it is inferior—small in manner and forced; but, as usual, wholly true to the place.

79. Munich.

Notable chiefly for the effort made to draw the attention away from the ugly arcade under the houses by the crowd of near figures. Compare the insistence on beautiful arcades in the Como and Domo d'Ossola.

80. Ypres.

Wholly lovely, and to be classed with the Abbeville and Evreux as one of the most precious records of former domestic architecture.

81. Rubens's House, Antwerp.

The kind of domestic architecture that destroyed all reverence for what preceded it, and brought us down to—what we are.

[1] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 30 n., and Plates 82, 83; and compare Nos. 86–89 in the National Gallery drawings, Vol. XIII. p. 222.]

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Note the beginning of modern anatomies and sciences and pseudo-classicalisms in the monstrous skulls of beasts.

82. CAEN.
83. FALAISE.

Two of the most careful and finished pieces of his later work, but rather architectural studies than pictures; and, alas! the architecture of the worst school. So little can the taste be really formed without study of sculpture as the queen of edifying law. See notes on Supplementary Sketches.[1]

86. PORTICO DI OTTAVIA, ROME.

All the life and death of Rome is in this quite invaluable drawing; but I have no time to talk of the life and death of Rome, and perhaps the enlightened modern student would only care for a view of the new tobacco manufactory under the Palatine.

87. WELL AT STRASBURG.

We don't want wells neither, in these days of wisdom, having Thirlmere turned on for us, or Loch Katrine, at our pleasure.[2] But—from the days of Jacob's well till—thirty years ago, such things were pleasant in human eyes.

88. WELL AT STRASBURG.

I close our Prout pencilling with seven examples of his superb work on stone; all by his own hand, and as literally and thoroughly his, touch for touch, as the pencil sketches themselves, and even more wonderful in their easy mastery of the more difficult material.

[1] [Below, p. 436; and on the relations of sculpture and architecture, see Vol. VIII. p. 174, Vol. XII. p. 84 *n.*, and General Index.]

[2] [On the Thirlmere waterworks, 1879 (for Manchester), see Vol. XIII. p. 517; the aqueduct from Loch Katrine (for Glasgow) is of older date, the works having been partially opened by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1859.]

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What a disgrace it is to modern landscape-painters that this book of Prout's "Sketches in Flanders and Germany"[1] should remain, to this day, the *only work* of true artistic value produced, that is to say, by the artist's own hand, purchasable by the public of Europe, in illustration of their national architecture!

89. Well at Nuremberg.

This study is one of the most beautiful, but also one of the most imaginative, that ever Prout made—highly exceptional and curious.

The speciality of Nuremberg is that its walls are of stone, but its windows—especially those in the roof, for craning up merchandise—are of wood. All the projecting windows and all the dormers in this square are of wood. But Prout could not stand the inconsistency, and deliberately petrifies all the wood. Very naughty of him! I have nothing to say in extenuation of this offence; and, alas! secondly, the houses have, in reality, only three stories, and he has put a fourth on, out of his inner consciousness!

I never knew him do such a thing before or since; but the end of it is that this drawing of Nuremberg is immensely more Nurembergy than the town itself, and a quite glorious piece of mediæval character.

90. Ulm.

91. Prague: Tower of the Gate.

92. Prague: Stadthaus.—The realization of sketch No. 24.

93. Brunswick: Rathhaus.

[1] [For references to this book, which first incited Ruskin's parents to foreign travel, see Vol. I. p. xxix., Vol. III. p. 217.]



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94. COBLENZ.

I have always held this lithograph to show all Prout's qualities in supreme perfection, and proudly finish our series of pencil and chalk work with it.

We now come to a large series of early colour studies, promising better things than ever came of them; and then the examples of Prout for which we are simply to blame the public taste he had to meet, and not him. There were no Pre-Raphaelites in those days. On the walls at the Scala Palace, in that sketch of Verona, No. 49, Prout has written, conscientiously, "brick": but do you think, if he had painted it of brick, anybody would have bought the drawing? Since those days, all the work of Walker, of Boyce, of Alfred Hunt, of Albert Goodwin, of John Brett[1] (the whole school of them, mind you, founded first on the strong Pre-Raphaelite veracities which were all but shrieked down at the first seeing of them, and which I had to stand up alone for, against a whole national clamour of critical vituperation),[2] all that affectionate and laborious painting from nature has familiarized you, now, with birds, and ivy, and blossoms, and berries, and mosses, and rushes, and ripples, and trickles, and wrinkles, and twinkles; and, of course, poor old Prout's conventional blue wash won't look its best afterwards. Be thankful to *them* (and somewhat also—I say it not in pride, but as a part of the facts —to *Modern Painters* and me) and indulgent to the old workman, who did the best he could for his customers, and the most he could for his money.

95. THE ENGLISH COTTAGE.—See Preface, p. 385.

[1] [See above, for Walker, pp. 339-348; for Boyce, p. 162; for A. Hunt, p. 50; for Brett, p. 153. For Mr. Albert Goodwin, see (in a later volume) Ruskin's Notes on "a Series of Drawings made for St. George's Guild": they were exhibited in 1886 at the Fine Art Society in conjunction with a collection of drawings by Mr. Goodwin.]

[2] [See Vol. XII. pp. xliii.-xlix., for the history of Ruskin's defence of the Pre-Raphaelites.]

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96. LAUNCESTON.

Had this drawing been brought to me as an early Turner, I should have looked twice, and thrice, at it before saying no. If Prout had only had just ever so little more pride, and some interest in British history, he would have been a painter, indeed, and no mean pencil draughtsman. But he just missed it—and a miss is as bad as a mile, or a million of miles; and I say nothing more of the series of water-colours here, except only that many a good lesson may be learned from them in chiaroscuro, and in flat tinting, by modest students.

## SUPPLEMENTARY DRAWINGS

There are—or ought to be, if I get them together in time—eleven of my own, namely:—

104. CALAIS.[1]

104*a*. THE AVENTINE.

105. DUCAL PALACE AND BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

106. DUCAL PALACE: FOLIAGE OF SOUTH-WEST ANGLE.

107. PILLARS OF THE PIAZZETTA.[2]

108. PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PILLARS OF THE PIAZZETTA.

108*a*. CHIAROSCURO STUDY OF THE SAME PILLARS.

[1] [See above, p. 408 (where Ruskin's drawing is reproduced); and for the Aventine, p. 406; for the Ducal Palace, p. 424. No. 106 has been given as Plate H in Vol. X. (p. 358). No. 107 is here given (Plate 4).]

[2] [The "Pillars of the Piazzetta" here referred to are not the tall columns usually so called, but the "St. Jean d'Acre Pillars": see above, p. 427 *n*. For notes on Ruskin's drawing of them see the circular already referred to (p. 428); reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, i. 246, and in a later volume of this edition.]

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109. THE CASA D'ORO. (*On the south wall.*)[1]

110. WINDOW ON THE GRAND CANAL.

111. ABBEVILLE CROCKET.

112. OAK-LEAF.[2]

113. MOSS AND OXALIS.

I meant, when first this exhibition was planned, to have made it completely illustrative of the French flamboyant architecture, which Prout had chiefly studied. But I have been too much interrupted by other duties;[3] and I can only now point out, once more—after thirty years of reiterating this vital fact to architects in vain—that until they are themselves absolute masters of sculptural surface, founded on natural forms, they do not know the meaning of any good work in any school.

Sculptural *surface*, observe.[4] They fancy they have drawn an ornament when they have got its outline: but in sculpture the *surface* is everything; the outline follows, and is compelled by it. Thus, in the piece of Ducal Palace sculpture, No. 106, the entire value of it depends on the chiaroscuro of its surfaces; and it would be as absurd to think of sketching it without shade as a piece of rippled lagoon. And in every minutest finial and crocket of that French flamboyant, the surfaces are studied to a perfection, not less subtle, though relieved by more violent shade. The fast study, No. 111, shows the action of the curved stems and flow of surfaces in one of the crockets of Abbeville. The photograph, No. 117,[5] and the study of oak-leaves, No. 112, will

[1] [For Ruskin's experiences when he was drawing this house, see Vol. III. p. 214 n.]

[2] [See the Plate opposite.]

[3] [As, for instance, in the work connected with the threatened restoration of St. Mark's.]

[4] [See above, p. 360.]

[5] [Previous editions, and the reprint in *Ruskin on Pictures*, read "See photograph, No. 6, and . . ."; but no such photograph is elsewhere mentioned, while the account of the photograph No. 117 at p. 388 makes the text clearly applicable to that.]

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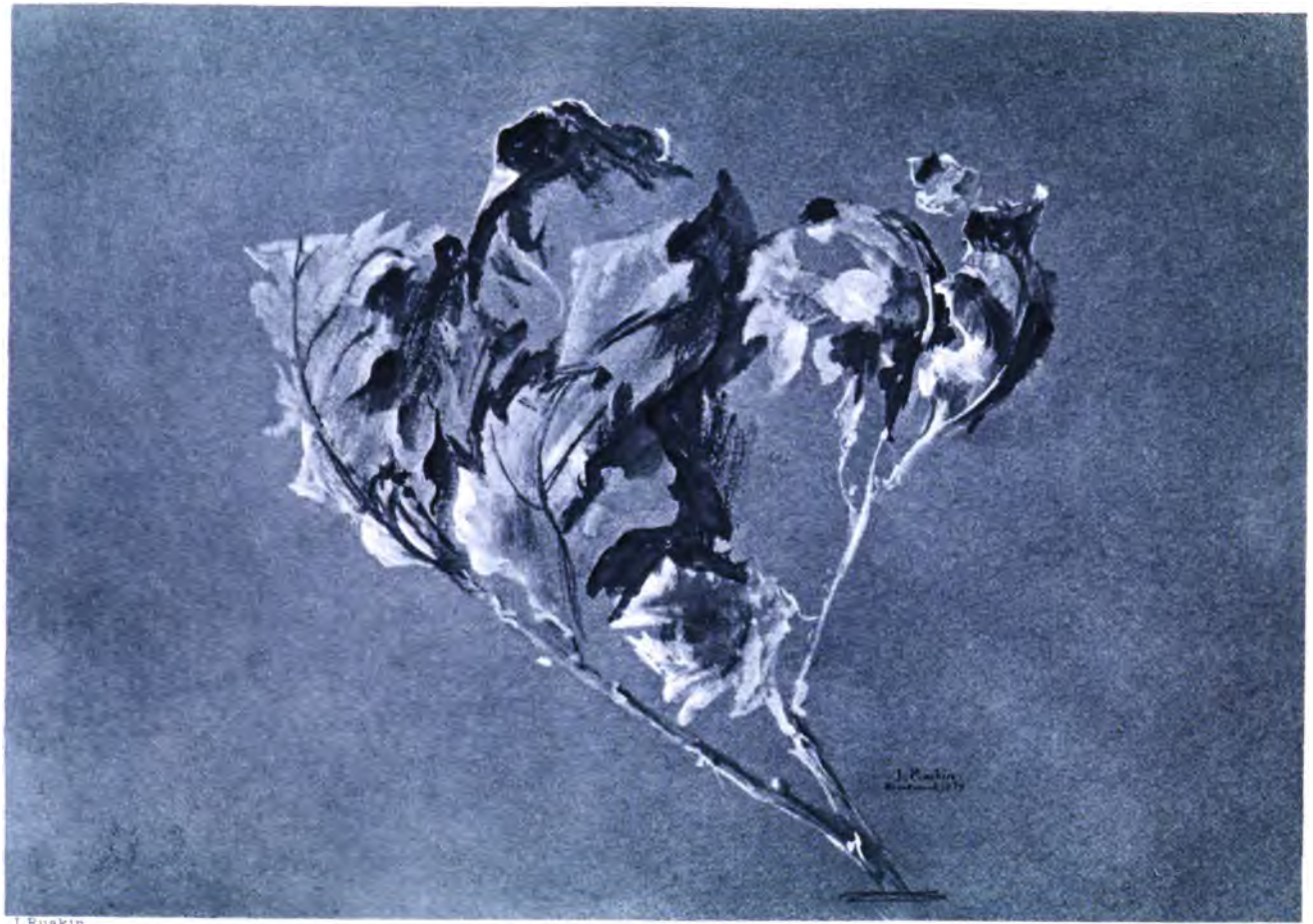

J. Ruskin

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**Study of Oak Leaves**
(1879)

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show how the natural forms of vegetation lend themselves to every need of such attentive design. I have painted this bit of leafage in two stages, showing—if any one cares to know it—the way Hunt used his body-colour; laying it first with extreme care in form and gradation, but in pure white, and then glazing over it—never disturbing it, or mixing it in the slightest degree with his clear colour. And it is only by this management of opaque colour that architectural detail can be drawn at speed with any useful result. See the bit of honeysuckle ornament, for instance (you must take the lens both to the oak-leaf drawing and this), at the top of the pillar in No. 108, and fancy the time it would have taken to express the bossy roundness of it in any other way. All disputes about the use of body-colour begin and end in the "to be or not to be" of accurate form.

Then there are three drawings of St. Mark's mosaics by Mr. Rooke :[1]—

114. FLORAL DECORATION.

115. MADONNA AND DAVID.

116. THE PROPHETS.

Then some variously illustrative photographs, etc., namely :—

117. ABBEVILLE.[2]

118. PICTURE OF ABBEVILLE.

106*a*. VENICE, THE PIAZZETTA.

11. LITHOGRAPH OF MODERN STRASBURG. (*On the east wall.*)

[1] [Mr. Rooke's drawings are now in the Ruskin Museum at Sheffield.]
[2] [See above, p. 388.]

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119 (?) IMPROVEMENTS IN MODERN LONDON.

Then in the glass case there is a little bit of real Venetian sixteenth-century silk-work—put there to show precisely what Shakespeare meant by "Valance of Venice gold in needlework" (*Taming of the Shrew*); and secondly, to show the use of minute points of colour in decoration carried on thus far from the Byzantine schools.

And, finally, there is the Meissonier, above referred to (p. 381), "Napoleon in 1814," on the Chaussée of Vitry, just after the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube:[1]—

"The French horsemen, though inferior to none in the world for audacity and prowess, were overmatched by their opponents, and driven back to the bridge of Arcis. Napoleon, who was on the other side, instantly rode forward to the entrance of the bridge, already all but choked up with fugitives, and drawing his sword, exclaimed, 'Let me see which of you will pass before me!' These words arrested the flight, and the division Friant, traversing the streets of Arcis in double-quick time, passed the bridge, formed on either side of its other extremity, and by their heavy fire drove back the allied horse.

. . . . . .

"Napoleon was repeatedly in imminent danger; nearly all his staff were killed or wounded. 'Fear nothing,' said he to the generals who urged him to retire: 'the bullet is not yet cast which is to kill me.' He seemed to court rather than fear death; his air was resolute but sombre; and as long as the battle raged, by the light of the burning houses behind and the flash of the enemies' guns in front, he continued to face the hostile batteries.

. . . . . .

"On leaving Arcis, instead of taking the road to Chalons or to Paris, he moved on the chaussée of Vitry, direct towards the Rhine. His letter to the Empress Marie Louise was in these terms:—

"'My love, I have been for some days constantly on horseback. On the 20th I took Arcis-sur-Aube. The enemy attacked me there at eight

[1] [Ruskin's "1814," the smaller of two versions, was bought by him for a thousand guineas. It used to hang over the fireplace in the "turret-room" at Brantwood. Ruskin did not keep it for "St. George's Schools," but sold it in 1882 for 5900 guineas. The larger version was sold in 1890 to M. Chaucard of the Magasins du Louvre for £32,000—a sum far in excess of anything given for the work of a living painter. Ruskin included his "1814" in a collection shown at the Royal Institution in 1869 in illustration of his lecture on "The Relations of Flamboyant Architecture to Contemporary and Subsequent Art." For his note in the catalogue, see a later volume of this edition; and for other references to Meissonier, see Ruskin's first letter on the Oxford Museum (Vol. XVI.) and *Letters to Ward*, ii. 12 (privately printed, 1893, and included in a later volume of this edition).]

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in the evening. I beat him the same evening. I took two guns and retook two. The next day the enemy's army put itself in array to protect the march of its columns on Bar-sur-Aube, and I resolved to approach the Marne and its environs. This evening I shall be at St. Dizier. Farewell, my love. Embrace my son.'" (See *Alison*, vol. x. pp. 396–406.)

It would be difficult to find a more perfect example of the French realistic school than this picture. It is, of course, conventional, and founded on photographic effect. The white horse in reality would have looked like a ghost in the twilight, and not one of the details of the housings been in the least visible: had these been so, much more should the details of the landscape have been. But in its kind it is without rivalship, and I purpose that it shall remain in St. George's schools—for a monument of War-sorrow, where War has been unjust.

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## II.—HUNT

### 142. The Butterfly.

Before saying anything more of the Hunt series, I want my readers once more clearly to understand what I have brought it here for—namely, to show them what real painting is, as such, wholly without inquiry concerning its sentiment or story. The Prouts are here for an exactly opposite reason—not at all to show you what mere pencilling is, as such, but what it can pencil for us of European scenery and history. Whereas this butterfly is here, not at all to teach you anything you didn't know about butterflies; nor the peach and grapes to teach you anything you didn't know about those familiar fruits; nor even that boy in his father's boots to teach you anything you didn't know before about boys and boots.[1] They are here merely to show you what is meant by painting, as distinguished from daubing, from plastering, from rough casting, from chromo-tinting, from tray-varnishing, from paper-staining, and in general from the sort of things that people in general do when you put a brush into their hands and a pot within reach of them.

Now that little brown-red butterfly (which Mr. Gurney is so fortunate in possessing) is a piece of real painting; and it is as good as Titian or anybody else ever did. And if you can enjoy it, you can enjoy Titian and all other good painters; and if you can't see anything in *it*, you can't see anything in *them*, and it is all affectation and pretence to say that you care about them.

And with this butterfly in the drawing I put first, please

[1] [No. 173. "My Father's Boots."]



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William Hunt

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look at the mug and loaf in the one I have put last, of the Hunt series, No. 171. The whole art of painting is in that mug—as the fisherman's genius was in the bottle. If you can feel how beautiful it is, how ethereal, how heathery and heavenly, as well as to the uttermost muggy, you have an eye for colour, and can enjoy heather, heaven, and everything else below and above. If not, you must enjoy what you can, contentedly, but it won't be painting; and in mugs, it will be more the beer than the crockery—and on the moors, rather grouse than heather.

Going back to No. 142, you will perhaps ask me why the poppy is so poor and the butterfly so rich? Mainly because the poppy withered, and the butterfly was pinned and permanent. But there are other reasons, of which more presently.[1]

144. Herring and Pilchard.

Supreme painting again, and done with his best pains; for these two subjects, and

146. Dead Chicken,

were done by the old man, in all kindness and care, at my own request, for me to give as types of work to country schools of art.[2] Yet no kindness or care could altogether enable him to work rightly under the direction of another mind; and the project was ultimately given up by me, the chicken, finished as it is, having been one of my chief disappointments. And here anent, let me enter into some

[1] [See below, p. 443.]

[2] [Compare *Two Paths*, § 69. Six of the drawings thus done for Ruskin were exhibited in the gallery of the Old Water-Colour Society between the years 1856 and 1861. "Some of these—in particular, one of 'Mushrooms: Study of Rose-Grey' (1860)—were exquisite. But the generous donor ultimately gave up the project. The old man used to pause in the task, which he was trying his very best to accomplish, and cry out, 'How difficult it is to paint this oyster-shell!' After painting some 'Pilchards: Study of Gold' in 1860, one of the most striking of the series, he wrote, however, 'If you want studies of colour, fish is the sort of thing to look at'" (Roget's *History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, ii. 196).]

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general account of the tenor of his drawings. They may be broadly divided into the following classes, into one or other of which every work of importance from his hand will distinctly fall.

### Class 1

Drawings illustrative of rural life in its vivacity and purity, without the slightest endeavour at idealization, and still less with any wish either to caricature or deplore its imperfections. All the drawings belonging to this class are virtually faultless, and most of them very beautiful. It is, I am glad to say, thoroughly represented in this room, which contains several examples of the highest quality—namely, 121, 168, 171, 172, 173, 175; besides two pieces of still life (169, and the interior, No. 174), properly belonging to the group.

### Class 2

Country life, with endeavour to add interest to it by passing sentiment. The drawings belonging to this class are almost always over-finished, and liable to many faults. There are three in this collection—120, 165, 166.

### Class 3

Country life, with some expression of its degradation, either by gluttony, cowardice, or rudeness. The drawings of this class are usually very clever, and apt to be very popular; but they are, on the whole, dishonourable to the artist. There are five examples here—namely, 157, 158, 161, 163, 164.

### Class 4

Flower pieces. Fruit is often included in these; but they form a quite separate class, being necessarily less finished drawings—the flowers sooner changing their form. Including the fungi among these, there are eight fine ones in the room—148, 150, 149, 152, 147, 151, 154, 156.

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**The Eavesdropper**

From a drawing in the possession of E.F. Carter, Esq.

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### Class 5

Fruit pieces, on which a great part of the artist's reputation very securely rests. Five first-rate ones are here, and several of interesting, though inferior, quality.

### Class 6

Dead animals. Alas! if he could but have painted living ones, instead of those perpetual bunches of grapes.[1] But it could not be. To a weakly, sensitive, nervous temperament, the perpetual changes of position, and perpetual suggestion of new beauty in an animal, are entirely ruinous: in ten minutes they put one in a fever. Only the very greatest portrait-painters — Sir Joshua and Velasquez[2] — can draw animals rightly.

I begin with this last class, and reascend to the highest.

**138. Dead Hare and Game.**

A most notable drawing of early practice, quite wonderful in textures of fur and in work of shadows, but tentative, and in many points failing.

**141. Dead Dove. (A.)**

A pure water-colour drawing, before his style was perfectly formed. Full of interest, but too conventional and slight in background.

**139. Dead Dove. (B.)**

Finished work of central time.

**145. Dead Dove. (C.)**

Replica, I suppose, of B, with completer background, and of highest quality. I must be pardoned for saying

[1] [Compare the critique in *Academy Notes*, above, p. 80.]
[2] [Compare, for Reynolds, *Eagle's Nest*, § 152; for Velasquez, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. §§ 13, 19.]

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so of my own drawing; but of course, after long and affectionate relations with the painter, it would be strange if I had not some of his best works.[1]

### 148. Pine Melon, and Grapes.

We were obliged to put this drawing low down, for, in spite of its dark background, it killed everything we put near it. To my mind it is the most majestic piece of work in the room. The grapes are the vintage of Rubens, and the shadows are the darkness of Tintoret. It is wholly free from any pettiness of manner, and in force, spring, and succulence of foliage it is as if the strength of nature were in it, rather than of human hand. I never saw it until now, and have learned from it more than, after my fifty years of labour, I thought anything but a Venetian picture could have taught me.

### 182. "Love what you Study, Study what you Love."

All *Modern Painters* in a nutshell of a sentence, and the painted nutshell perfect. (See Preface, p. 374 *n.*)

### 130. Grapes.

Consummate. Can't be better anywhere.

### 131. Mr. Sibeth's Quinces.

All that's best in this kind.

[1] [Bought by Ruskin's father. "I got a piece of advice from Hunt," he wrote to his son in 1852, "never to commission a picture. He could not have done my pigeon so well had he felt he was doing it for anybody" (Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*, p. 137). Ruskin, on hearing of the purchase, wrote from Venice:—

> "10*th Jan.* [1852].—I forgot—my head being full of Turner and Tintoret yesterday—to thank you for your kindness both to Hunt and me in buying the ringdove—no subject could possibly be better fitted to show his powers. I would—if I had given him a commission, which he says I ought not—have commissioned him just for that. You must come some day to visit Mr. Fawkes with me, and see Turner's ringdove—a rainbow made of down; but I doubt not Hunt's will be *very nearly* equal to it."

For another reference to Turner's ringdove at Farnley, see *Notes on Turner Sketches*, No. 59, Vol. XIII. pp. 274, 370.]

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Plums

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125. BULLACES.

Very fine, but conventional in background.

129. GRAPES.

Perfect work, but wasted. Why he did so many grapes, and scarcely ever sloes, or finely russet apples, or *growing* strawberries, always mystified me.

126. PLUMS.

Finest work, but a little dull. My own favourites of his plums were such variegated ones as 133 and 135; but I somehow never got any. This drawing, however, was the one of which Hunt said to me innocently—seeing it again after some ten years—"It's very nice, isn't it?"[1]

128. PLUMS.

The bit of oak-leaf here is very wonderful and interesting as an example, and what Hunt meant by saying to me once, "I like to see things 'fudged' out."[2] It is to be remembered, however, that this was his own special liking; and it must not be followed by the general student. The finest forms of anything cannot be "fudged" out, but must be drawn, if possible, with the first line, at least with the last one, for ever.

149. DR. DRAGE'S FUNGI.[3]

A perfect gem; "Venetian red" in its best earthly splendour: it could only be more bright in clouds.

[1] [For a fuller record of this conversation, see *The Cestus of Aglaia*, § 3.]

[2] [For another note on this remark by Hunt, and on his characteristics generally, see *Catalogue of the Educational Series*, Nos. 212, 213. Hunt was fond of using the phrase, "fudging it out," to describe a painter's processes. "He has fudged it out," he said of a brother artist; "we must all fudge it out. There is no other way than fudging it out." See Roget's *History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, i. 469.]

[3] [See also *Academy Notes* for 1858, pp. 200, 203, 205 of this volume.]

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147. Mr. Fry's Hawthorn.

A little overworked, but very glorious. Soft and scented, I think, if you only wait a little, and make-believe very much.

155. (Mine.) Hawthorn and Birds' Nests.

The hawthorn this time a little *under*worked, but very good; and nests as good as can be.

148. Lilac. (Mr. Sibeth's.)

Fine, but curiously redundant. The upper branch by itself, or the lower with only the laburnum, or both together without the third, would have been beautiful; but two's company, and three's none.

150. Vase with Rose and Basket with Fruit.
151. Flowers and Fruit.

Two resplendent ones; everything that he could do best in this kind—absolutely right in colour, absolutely in light and shade, and without any rivalship in past or present art.

162. The Gamekeeper.[1]

Early study. Please observe that Hunt learned his business, not in spots but in lines. Compare the entirely magnificent sketch of the riverside, No. 124, which is as powerful in lines as Rembrandt, and the St. Martin's Church, No. 123, which is like a bit of Hogarth.

157. The Invalid.

Full of humour; but there is no place for humour in true painting. See also No. 164, "The Young Artist," and

[1] [Reproduced at p. 180 of Mr. Harry Quilter's *Preferences in Art.*]

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Birds' Nests & May Blossom

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"The Wasp," No. 168. If I could have the currant-pie without the boy, I should be content.

161. GIPSIES.

Very powerful; historic in its kind.[1]

166. PRAYING BOY.[2] (MR. QUILTER'S.)

Over-finished, as its companion, No. 165, an endeavour at doing what he did not understand. So also the large study of himself, No. 176, with the "Mulatto," No. 122, and "Wanderer," No. 120. His mode of work was entirely unfitted for full life-size.

121. MR. QUILTER'S STABLE-BOY.[3]

172. MR. ORROCK'S SHY SITTER,[4] AND THE BLESSING (171).[5]

On the contrary, he is here again in his utmost strength —and in qualities of essential painting—unconquerable. In the pure faculty of the painter's art—in what Correggio, and Tintoret, and Velasquez, and Rubens, and Rembrandt, meant by *painting*—that single bunch of old horse-collars[6] is worth all Meissonier's horse-bridles, boots, breeches, epaulettes and stars, together.

The other drawings of the highest class need no commentary. There is not much in the two little candle-lights, Nos. 168, 175, but all that is, of the finest; and the three

[1] [Reproduced at p. 184 of Mr. Harry Quilter's *Preferences in Art*.]

[2] [Otherwise called "Devotion." See p. 79.]

[3] [Generally known as "The Eavesdropper." Reproduced at p. 177 of Mr. Harry Quilter's *Preferences in Art*. Mr. Quilter says: "I remember Sir Frederick Burton saying many years ago to my father—perhaps in a fit of generous enthusiasm—that this is the finest water-colour in the world" (p. 182).]

[4] [No. 172 is reproduced as frontispiece in the illustrated (1880) edition of the *Notes*.]

[5] ["This has been reproduced in etching by Mr. Waltner."—*Note to Illustrated Edition*.]

[6] [*i.e.*, in the "Stable-boy." For the reference to Meissonier, see above, pp. 381, 438.]

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drawings with which I close our series, "The Shy Sitter," No. 172, "The Fisherman's Boy," No. 173, and "The Blessing," No. 171, things that the old painter was himself unspeakably blessed in having power to do. The strength of all lovely human life is in them; and England herself lives only, at this hour, in so much as, from all that is sunk in the luxury, sick in the penury, and polluted in the sin of her great cities, Heaven has yet hidden for her old men and children such as these, by their fifties, in her fields and on her shores, and fed them with Bread and Water.[1]

[1] [In the original editions an Appendix followed, in four sections, containing reprints of passages from Ruskin's works (see above, p. 369). These were as follows:—

Appendix i.—*The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, ch. vi. § 10 ("Every human action gains . . ." to the end), in this edition, Vol. VIII. pp. 233–234; and ch. vi. §§ 16, 17, ("But so far as it can be rendered . . ." to the end of § 17), in this edition, *ibid.*, pp. 241–242.

Appendix ii.—*Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. i. §§ 1–3 ("The essence of picturesque character . . ." to the end of § 3), in this edition Vol. VI. pp. 10–12.

Appendix iii.—*Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. i. § 13 ("And, in some sort, the hunter of the picturesque . . ." to the end of § 13), in this edition, Vol. VI. pp. 21–22.

Appendix iv.—*Eagle's Nest*, §§ 82 ("I do not doubt . . ." to the end of the section), 86, 87.]

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**The Blessing**

From the drawing in the possession of James Orrock, Esq.

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[1] [This Index is reprinted from the original pamphlet, but several additional references are here supplied, and the descriptions are occasionally made more explicit.]
[2] ["Now Mr. Huish's."—*Ill. Ed.*]
[3] ["Now belonging to Mr. John T. Lord."—*Ill. Ed.*]
[4] ["Now the property of Mr. John C. Robinson."—*Ill. Ed.*]
[5] [A lithograph of modern Strasburg: see p. 437.]
[6] ["Now belonging to Mr. J. S. Kennedy."—*Ill. Ed.*]
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[1] ["Now belonging to Mr. Young."—*Ill. Ed.*]
[2] ["Now belonging to Mr. John T. Lord."—*Ill. Ed.*]
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[1] [The illustrated edition added: "119*a*. Portrait of Samuel Prout. Contributed by Mr. Prout-Newcombe."]

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[1] ["Now Mr. A. T. Hollingsworth's."—*Ill. Ed.*]

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| 167 | Girl's Head | Mr. W. J. Galloway |
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| 169 | The Blacksmith's Shop, p. 442 | Mr. W. H. Urwick |
| 170 | By the Wayside | Mr. S. J. Thacker |
| 171 | The Blessing, pp. 441, 442, 447, 448 | Mr. Jas. Orrock |
| 172 | The Shy Sitter, pp. 442, 447 | „ |
| 173 | My Father's Boots, pp. 440, 442, 448 | Mr. John Rhodes |
| 174 | An Interior, pp. 378, 383, 442 | Mr. Ruskin |
| 175 | Boy with Lantern, pp. 442, 447 | Mr. J. J. Elliott |
| 176 | Portrait of Hunt (painted by himself), p. 447 | Mr. Sutton Palmer |
| 176* | Grapes—Muscatel, Peach, and Spray of Raspberries | Mr. George Gurney |
| 177 | Portrait of Saml. Prout, by Wm. Hunt [reproduced in the illustrated edition of the *Notes by Mr. Ruskin on Samuel Prout and William Hunt*] | Mr. Haydon |
| 178 | Portrait of Wm. Hunt, by himself | Mr. Osler |
| 179 | A Green Melon, Grapes, and Plums | Sir John Swinburne, Bart. |
| 180 | Shells | Mr. Barnes |
| 181 | Dead Pigeons | „ |
| 182 | A Bit of Mont Blanc | „ |
| 183 | Bird's Nest and Apple Blossom | Mr. W. Barfoot |
| 184 | The Art Critic | „[1] |

[1] [The illustrated edition added: "185. Pencil Sketches. . . . Mr. J. F. Hall." The original editions included finally the following alphabetical "List of Contributors to the Exhibition":—

Barfoot, Mr. W.
Barnes, Mr.
Beacall, Mr. W.
Brown, Dr. John
Coleridge, The Right Hon. Lord
Drage, Dr.
Duncan, Mr. E.
Eastlake, Mr. W.
Elliott, Mr. J. J.
Fry, Mr.
Galloway, Mr. W. J.
Gibbs, Mr. J. W.
Gordon, The Rev. O.
Gurney, Mr. Geo.
Haag, Mr. Carl
Harris, Mr. Alfred
Haydon, Mr.
Hewett, Mr. Prescott
Hine, Mr. H. G.
Hollingsworth, Mr. A. T.
Howard-Keeling, Mr. H.
Hunt, Mr. A.
Keily, Mr. A.
Knight, Mr. J. W.
Knowles, Mr. James
Lyon, Mr. A. W.
Moore, Mr. H.
Orrock, Mr. James
Ottway, Mr. J. C.
Palmer, Mr. Sutton
Payne, Mr. A. F.
Peck, Mr. G.
Prout, Mr. S. G.
Quale, Mr. E.
Quilter, Mr. W.
Reid, Mr. G. W., F.S.A.
Rhodes, Mr. John
Robinson, Mr. J. C.
Ruskin, Mr.
Safe, Mr. James W.
Sale, Colonel
Scrivener, Mr. W. C.
Sibeth, Mr. Edmund
Strutt, The Hon. Henry
Stuart, Mr. W. J.
Swinburne, Sir John
Thacker, Mr. S. J.
The Fine Art Society
Townsend, The Rev. W. J.
Urwick, Mr. W. H.
Whitmore, Mrs. C. S.
Wigan, Mr. F.
Wigzell, Mr. J. J.]

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# APPENDIX


I. LETTERS ON ACADEMY NOTES (1855, 1875)

II. LETTERS TO JAMES SMETHAM (1854–1871)

III. SPEECH ON THOMAS SEDDON (1857)

IV. LETTERS TO G. F. WATTS, R.A. (1860–1866)

V. THE REFLECTION OF RAINBOWS IN WATER (1861)

VI. EVIDENCE BEFORE THE ROYAL ACADEMY COMMISSION (1863)

VII. MODERN CARICATURE (1883, 1888)

VIII. THE ART OF MEZZOTINT (1884)

IX. THE NUDE IN ART (1885)

X. NOTES ON J. E. MILLAIS, R.A. (1886)

XI. PASSAGES FROM EXHIBITION CATALOGUES, ETC.:—

1. AN EXHIBITION OF STUDIES IN OIL BY THE HON. STEPHEN COLERIDGE, 1891 (A LETTER OF 1884)
2. AN EXHIBITION OF DRAWINGS BY SUTTON PALMER (1886)
3. THOMAS GIRTIN (1887)
4. A NOTE BY MR. ARTHUR SEVERN, R.I. (1892)


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# I

# LETTERS ON "ACADEMY NOTES"

## (1855, 1875)

[Several letters from Ruskin referring to his *Academy Notes* have already been printed, and are accordingly here included.]

### 1

[*May* 1855.]

DEAR MR. SMITH,[1]—I believe Spottiswoode must have kept some of their men at home to finish this.[2] I am very much obliged to them, and should like the printers who stayed in to do it to have half-a-crown each, from me, for a holiday present. Will you kindly give orders to that effect. The proofs now sent back must be carefully revised by the press-corrector —but I don't want to see another revise: so the moment they are ready, let the thing be printed off, and sold forthwith as near the doors of the Academy as may be.

Please send a copy of the pamphlet, the moment you have any ready, to Mr. J. F. Lewis; Mr. G. Richmond; Miss A. F. Mutrie;[3] Mr. D. G. Rossetti (14 Chatham Place, Blackfriars Bridge); Mr. William Rossetti, same address; Miss Heaton, 16 Beaumont St., Cavendish Square; Dr. Acland, Oxford; and Mr. Harrison;—all with my compliments.

Send to nobody else—of course Mr. Williams will have one.

I send to town that all may be ready for early press to-morrow morning.

Most truly yours,

J. RUSKIN.

[1] [This letter to Mr. George Smith (of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.) is undated, but must have been written in May 1855. It is here reprinted from the privately-issued (1892) *Letters upon Subjects of General Interest from John Ruskin to Various Correspondents*, pp. 17, 18.]

[2] [That is, the first series of *Academy Notes*, published on June 1, 1855.]

[3] [Whose works were noticed: see above, p. 7. Miss Heaton was a correspondent whom Ruskin was advising on the purchase of pictures. Mr. Harrison is his old friend W. H. Harrison. For Mr. Williams (in the firm of Smith, Elder & Co.) see Vol. VIII. p. 275 *n.*]



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ARTHUR SEVERN'S, HERNE HILL,
*London, S.E.*, 1875.[1]

MY DEAR ELLIS,—So many thanks for your kind letter, and sending to Birmingham, etc. Yes, please get me that Italian economic book.[2]

I must keep the *publishing* of the *Notes* with Allen, not to break the public impression of my obstinacy; but if you would endure the trouble and petty worries of letting them be sold from your counter, you should have them exclusively in London. No—I can't say that, neither—for if other booksellers wanted them I could not refuse; but I will take no measures for regular sale except from your counter,—if you will allow it.

They'll be out next week, very early I hope.

Ever affectionately yours,
J. RUSKIN.

May I put, on title—"G. Allen, Sunnyside, and F. S. Ellis, 29 New Bond Street"?

3

AYLESBURY, *May 26th*, 1875.

MY DEAR ELLIS,—I am very glad to have been brought here at this moment;—the hawthorn, and buttercups with clover, purple and gold, being beyond anything I ever yet dreamed of in England; and the walks through it all so heavenly.

By enclosed note you will see that if I allow £20 per 1000 or £2 per 100, I am well guarded as to cost. Then if you give me £3, 10s. for the hundred, we have both 30 per cent.—which seems to me pleasant and fair? And you can do just as you please about the booksellers, none shall have any but you and Allen.

Mrs. Severn is greatly amused by playing at agency, and has taken orders for 50 or so. She is to have 100,—the first parcel of them sent. Other sendings you can order from Jowett[3] at your own pleasure, but I am still uneasy at the idea of the trouble you will have for so small a matter.

I think *Fors* for June, though delayed for a day or two, won't be a bad one; for the biography, simple though it be, amuses me myself as it comes into my head, and the correspondence tickles me.

Always faithfully yours,
J. RUSKIN.

[1] [This and the following letters are reprinted from the privately-issued volume—*Stray Leaves from Professor Ruskin to a London Bibliopole*, 1892, pp. 22–31.]

[2] [An old Italian book on the *Monte di pietà*.]

[3] [The manager at Messrs. Watson and Hazell's printing works at Aylesbury.]

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AYLESBURY [*May or June* 1875].

MY DEAR ELLIS,—It's immensely good of you undertaking the book together with Allen. I've ordered the title-page, with double publisher, by this post. *Such* a bother as the thing has been to me;—one can't see the pictures for the crowd, and I miss some, and over-rate others, again and again. But there's a nice spicy flavour in it now, I think—as a whole —quite a "loving cup" for the Academy. I get my full revise to-morrow, and send for press on Monday. You will have all you want sent you on the same terms as Allen; and please, offer it in any way you think best to the other booksellers and to the public—only don't advertise in newspapers.

Gratefully yours,
J. R.

5

GEORGE INN, AYLESBURY,
*June* 1875.

DEAR ELLIS,—*Notes* ready, price 1s. I hope to be sent on Friday.—Can't tell the trade price till to-morrow, but it will be reasonable, I doubt not. The thing is bigger than I meant—fifty-six pages.[1]

Mr. Jowett, Printing Works, Aylesbury, will receive all directions from you. I'm here till Friday.

Ever faithfully yours,
J. R.

6

GEORGE INN, AYLESBURY,
*June* 1875.

MY DEAR ELLIS,—At the last moment I discover two fatal mistakes[2] in my last sheet of *Notes*, and must cancel it, and you can't have them now till Tuesday. In case you get your packet, mind you send none out; but I hope I've stopped them. They'll be ready on Tuesday.

Ever gratefully yours,
J. R.

LONDON, *June 27th*, 1875.

MY DEAR ELLIS,—I wonder if I've by any chance lost a letter of yours, for I haven't had a single word since the *Notes* came out—and I expected some compliments!—and am disappointed! Please send me just a little line, when you come home again, to Brantwood; though I shan't be there till Wednesday week, I believe—but they'll know where I am.

I left a packet of autographs (the refuse of that nice parcel, which seemed to me to spoil the rest) in Bond St. the other day. If they're the least use to anybody you can put them in auction, or allow me for them; if not, send them to care of Arthur Burgess, 73 Montpelier Road, Peckham, S.E.

Always affectionately yours,
J. R.

[1] [As a matter of fact the pamphlet consisted of fifty-*nine* pages.]
[2] [Merely misprints, to rectify which the sheet was cancelled.]

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## II

# LETTERS TO JAMES SMETHAM[1]

## (1854–1871)

### 1

DENMARK HILL, *15th Nov.* 1854.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am quite amazed, almost awed, by the amount of talent and industry and thoughtfulness shown in these books of yours. What is the nature of your artistic occupation? I am very anxious to know all that you are willing to tell me about yourself. Please let me keep the volumes at least until Tuesday next. I cannot look them over properly sooner; and meantime send me a line, if I may ask you to take this trouble, telling me what your real employment in life has been, and how your genius has been employed or *un*employed in it.—Faithfully yours, and obliged,

J. RUSKIN.

[1] [James Smetham (1821–1889), draughtsman, painter, and essayist, had attended Ruskin's lectures at the Architectural Museum in 1854 (Vol. XII. pp. 474–508)—his biographer states (p. 23) at the Working Men's College, but the College had not at that time been founded—and was led to show some of his books of drawings, which Ruskin took home for their better inspection. This brought from him the first of the letters here reprinted from the *Letters of James Smetham, with an Introductory Memoir, edited by Sarah Smetham and William Davies*, 1891, p. 23.

Smetham's reply (November 16, 1854) will be found at pp. 2–7 of the *Letters*. He gave an interesting account of his early impressions and struggles. "I exhibited in Liverpool first," he added, "in 1847; at the Academy in 1851, 1852, 1853, and 1854, but the last two years my best picture was returned and the portraits put in." He said that he was partly employed as a drawing-master at the Wesleyan Normal School, Westminster. He did not complain of want of employment or appreciation, but he yearned for sympathy.

Ruskin asked leave to show at his next lecture one of Smetham's drawings, and this was done. It was the drawing of "The Last Supper," praised by Ruskin in Vol. XII. p. 506. In later years Smetham made a picture from it, "The Hymn of the Last Supper," which was exhibited in the studio of his friend Rossetti and afterwards well hung (through the good offices of Watts) at the Academy, in 1869 (No. 450).

Smetham's acquaintance with Ruskin, thus commenced, led to a visit at Denmark Hill in 1855, of which his account has been quoted in Vol. V. pp. xlvii., xlviii., and to a return visit by Ruskin (see the *Letters*, p. 69).

In February 1857 Smetham sent to Ruskin a drawing which was the first conception of a picture painted by him four years afterwards called "The Women of the Crucifixion." "It represented the women who beheld the crucified Jesus 'afar off,' their countenances suffused with devout anguish and pity" (*Letters*, p. 18). The



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*February* 1857.

DEAR MR. SMETHAM,—I hardly know whether I am more gratified by your kindly feeling or more sorry that you should think it is in any wise necessary to express it in so costly a way; for costly this drawing has been to you, both of time, thought, and physical toil. I have hardly ever seen any work of the kind so far carried as the drawing in the principal face. I shall indeed value it highly: but if indeed you think any words or thoughts of mine have been ever true to you, *pray* consider these likely to be the truest, that it is unsafe for you, with your peculiar temperament, to set yourself subjects of this pathetic and exciting kind for some time to come. Your health is not sturdy: you are not satisfied with what you do; and have to do *some* work that is irksome and tedious to you. If your work is divided between that which is tedious and that which tries your feelings and intellect to the utmost, no nervous system can stand it; and you should, I am very strongly persuaded, devote yourself to drawing and painting pretty and pleasant faces and things, involving little thought or pathos until, your skill being perfectly developed, you find yourself able to touch the higher chords without effort. I should like to know, if you have leisure any day to tell me, your entire meaning in this drawing. Is it merely the women at the cross with the multitude behind deriding; or have you intended any typical character in it?

I hope Mrs. Smetham is well, and that she will forgive me for being the cause of this additional toil to you.—With sincere remembrances to her, believe me, gratefully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

picture is in the collection of the painter's friend and patron Mr. J. S. Budgett, of Stoke Park, Guildford. The drawing brought from Ruskin the second letter, here reprinted from p. 19 of the *Letters*.

Ruskin's kindly warning proved prophetic, for in the autumn of 1857 occurred Smetham's "first serious illness, giving intimation, as it were, of the darker years by which his life was closed." Subsequently Smetham "sought to make his way into book illustration, but without much success"; he accordingly invited subscriptions for a separate issue of etchings from his own designs. In connexion with this scheme, which continued in operation for three years, he received the letters (3), reprinted from p. 21 of the *Letters*. The etchings were afterwards collected under the title *Studies from an Artist's Sketch-Book*.

To the same date and subject belongs the extract from a letter (4,) reprinted from p. 82 of the *Letters*.

The next letter (5), reprinted from p. 148, was in answer to one telling of the death of Smetham's mother.

The success of Smetham's "Hymn of the Last Supper" led him to execute other paintings of large subjects, but these were rejected at the Academy. He found, however, private purchasers, and was rich in the appreciation and friendship of discriminating judges such as Rossetti, Shields, Mr. Budgett, and the late Lady Mount Temple. He still corresponded with Ruskin, as appears from letter (6), reprinted from p. 222 of the *Letters*.

In 1878 his health gave way. "The light of the fine intellect faded. He abode in the silence of a closed spirit. . . . He died on February 5, 1889" (*Letters*, p. 29). Ruskin wrote of the event (*ibid.*, p. 27) as being

> "one of the most deeply mourned losses to me among the few friends with whom I could take 'sweet counsel.'"]

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[1859.]

MY DEAR SMETHAM,—I received your interesting letter with great pleasure, and you may use my name in any way you please among your friends, but I would not have it in public prints except unconspicuously and alphabetically under letter R. It is impossible, however, to see you just now. I am just finishing *Modern Painters*, and can really see not even my best friends, among whom I am proud to class you. With best regards to Mrs. Smetham,—Affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

. . . I think the last *very* beautiful indeed,[1] and it is quite a lesson in etching to me just now, which I much wanted.

. . . These etchings of yours are very wonderful and beautiful; I admire both exceedingly. But pray, on account of the fatigue, don't work so finely, and don't draw so much on your imagination. Try and do a few easier subjects than this Noah one.[2] The labour of that has been tremendous.

4

[1860.]

"I never wrote a private letter to any human being which I would not let a bill-sticker chalk up six feet high on Hyde Park wall, and stand myself in Piccadilly and say 'I said it.'"[3]

5

*3rd March* 1867.

DEAR SMETHAM,—Thank you for your note. I am always glad to hear from you. You are happy in feeling that your mother *is* "at rest." My father died this day three years; but *I* look, when I pass, at the place where he lies, as at a prison from the blue sky and things he loved. I've had many a loss since of various kinds, too—Deaths in life: worse than Deaths true. You are very happy in your peace.—Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

[1] [The subject was "The Last Sleep."]

[2] ["The etching here alluded to was one of the building of the ark, containing many figures, elaborated to a high degree of finish" (*Letters*, p. 21).]

[3] [This extract occurs in a letter of Smetham's, dated October 20, 1860: "I have had some kind letters from Ruskin, one giving me leave to print anywhere or anyhow any opinion he may have expressed about my work in private letters, in bits, in wholes, or how I like; and concluding with a very characteristic sentence: 'I never . . . I said it.' Isn't that 'spirity,' but is it not also very grand?" Compare the passage in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 59—"I never wrote a letter in my life which all the world are not welcome to read if they will"—which served as a motto to *Arrows of the Chace*.]

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6

Oxford, 1*st January* 1871.

My dear Smetham,—I cannot easily tell you how glad I am to have your letter, how more than glad to know of your tranquil and honourable life. Long may it thus continue. But let me have a line sometimes to say that it does so. If I cannot answer, you will know it is only because my hand is weary, or the power of the dog gone before its task is done.—Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

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## III

# SPEECH ON THOMAS SEDDON[1]

## (1857)

1. Mr. Ruskin commenced by remarking that it was no part of his intention, in appearing before them, to enter into a general consideration of the views which had actuated the formation of the committee which had been set on foot, relative to the purchase by the nation of Seddon's great picture of Jerusalem, which was now exhibited before them. There were associated in that committee men of various opinions and of various

[1] [Thomas Seddon (1821–1856) was the son of the eminent cabinetmaker, and was brought up to his father's business, devoting himself more particularly to the designing of furniture. He subsequently adopted painting as his profession, and was a devotee of the strictest sect of the Pre-Raphaelites. In 1849, when he went on his first sketching tour to Bettws-y-Coed, we see the spirit in which he approached his art. He was in the company of several artists, and was much surprised at their thinking a day enough for a sketch, for which to him weeks seemed all too few. He applauded too, says his biographer, "the heroic resolution of an amateur who declared he would give himself three weeks' hard labour to endeavour to draw one single branch of a tree properly, and would only go on drawing if he found he succeeded in that attempt." In 1853 he accompanied Holman Hunt to the East, whence he returned in 1854 with two finished pictures, the "Pyramids of Ghizeh," and "Jerusalem and the Valley of Jehoshaphat"; the latter is now No. 563 in the Tate Gallery. It was painted on the spot, and took five months' continuous work in its execution. "After visiting every part of the city," he wrote from Jerusalem, "and surrounding country to determine what I would do, I have encamped upon the hill to the south, looking up the valley of Jehoshaphat; I have sketched the view which I see from the opening of my tent. I am painting from one hundred yards higher up, where I see more of the valley, with the Tombs of the Kings and Gethsemane. I get up before five, breakfast, and begin soon after six. I come in at twelve and dine, and sleep for an hour; and then, about two, paint till sunset." During all this time Seddon camped out—sleeping in a deserted tomb in the Field of Aceldama, on the Hill of Evil Counsel. On his return to London, Seddon opened an exhibition of his Eastern sketches at 14 Berners Street (March–June 1855):—

"Mr. Ruskin came," he writes, "and stayed a long time. He was much pleased with everything and especially 'Jerusalem,' which he praised wonderfully; and in good truth it is something for a man who has studied pictures so much to say, 'Well, Mr. S., before I saw these, I never thought it possible to attain such an effect of tone and light without sacrificing truth of colour.'"

In 1856 he had another exhibition of his works, this time at Conduit Street. In the autumn of that year he set out for a second journey to the East, but was seized with dysentery and died at Cairo, where he is buried. A movement was then set on foot for promoting some memorial to the painter. The following letter (reprinted



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professions, and there was such a contrast in the characters of the individuals who had united to further this object, that it could hardly be expected that he should appear before this meeting in any way as the exponent of all their various views. He might perhaps be allowed, in some measure, to express the views of that portion of the committee who began the movement, [and] with whom he entirely sympathised.

2. He believed that some objection had been taken to the idea of placing this picture in the national collection of paintings, because it was said that they sought to bring it forward as a unique picture, or as one so admirable that they were never likely to look upon such again. For his own part he differed from that view. It was not because he considered it

from *Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelitism*, by W. M. Rossetti, 1899, p. 158) refers to the preliminary arrangements :—

> "My dear William,—I shall be very happy if I can be of use in this matter; but I don't quite see of what use I could be at this first meeting. I think that, if the points I spoke of on Monday are those which the Committee think it would be well to mark in the prospectus, I could set down for you quite as much as I said about them at last meeting; but I couldn't do this *at* a meeting, but in a quiet evening at home. If you want me at the next meeting, however, make said meeting here [Denmark Hill], and I will make you all as comfortable as I can. At half-past seven, you shall have tea and muffins—and ink. I can't come out on Friday night; I'm always tired and apt to catch cold after the College night.
>
> "I am very sorry I have seen so little of you lately; it is not my fault. I can't work hard at present, and can't keep up with my correspondence and casual demands on time but by staying at home like a dormouse. But I have sincere regard for you, and your brother, and Miss Rossetti—just as much as ever—and am heartily sorry to see so little of you.
>
> "Yours always faithfully,
>
> "J. Ruskin."

The meeting was ultimately held at Holman Hunt's house. At this meeting, Ruskin remarked :—

> "The position which Mr. Seddon occupied as an artist appears to deserve some public recognition quite other than could be generally granted to genius, however great, which had been occupied only in previously beaten paths. Mr. Seddon's works are the first which represent a truly historic landscape art; that is to say, they are the first landscapes uniting perfect artistical skill with topographical accuracy, being directed with stern self-restraint to no other purpose than that of giving to persons who cannot travel trustworthy knowledge of the scenes which ought to be most interesting to them. Whatever degrees of truth may have been attained or attempted by previous artists have been more or less subordinate to pictorial and dramatic effect. In Mr. Seddon's works the primal object is to place the spectator, as far as art can do, in the scene represented, and to give him the perfect sensation of its reality, wholly unmodified by the artist's execution."

This report appeared in *Memoirs and Letters of the late Thomas Seddon, Artist.* By his brother. 1858, (also 2nd ed., 1859) p. 171. Subsequently a Committee was formed, consisting of Ruskin, Ford Madox Brown, Holman Hunt, Mr. W. M. Rossetti, and others, to arrange an exhibition of the artist's works and promote a memorial. The exhibition was held at the rooms of the Society of Arts, where a conversazione was held on May 6 to further the latter object. At this meeting Ruskin delivered the



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remarkable, but because he considered it *not* remarkable, that he wished this picture to become the property of the nation; he regarded it as the type of a class of pictures and of works which might be understood and imitated by other men, and the understanding of which would be advantageous to the nation in future.

3. In like manner it had been said that it was sought, as it were, to canonise Seddon as a saint—immortalise him as a hero—that they wished to bring forward his death as a martyrdom to the cause of painting. But it was not so. The death of Seddon had nothing remarkable or extraordinary in its character, but was merely a type of a class of deaths which were being continually offered up to the nation by great and good men, but which, in this case, a concurrence of pathetic circumstances justified them in bringing before the public notice. The simple sacrifice of life had in it nothing unusual—it was, on the contrary, a melancholy thing to reflect how continually we all of us lived upon the lives of others, and that in two ways, viz., upon lives which we take, and upon lives which are given. It was a terrible expression to use—this taking of life, but it was a true one. We took life in all cases in which, either for higher wages, or by the compulsion of commercial pressure, men were occupied without sufficient protection or guardianship in dangerous employments, involving an average loss of life, for which life we paid thoughtlessly in the price of the commodity, which, so far, was the price of blood. Nay, more than this, it was a well-recognised fact that there was scarcely an art or a science in the present day, in which there was not some concomitant circumstance of danger or disease, which science had not striven to abate proportionably with the endeavours to advance the skill of the workmen. And thus, though we had abolished slavery, we literally bargained daily for the lives of our fellow-men, although we should shrink with horror at the idea of purchasing their bodies; and if these evils, arising partly from pressure of population, but more from carelessness and cruelty in masters and consumers, from desire of cheapness, or blind faith in commercial necessities—if these evils went on increasing at the rate it seemed but too probable they would, England would soon have to add another supporter to her shield. She had good right still to her lion, never more than now. But she needed, in justice, another, to show that if she could pour forth life blood nobly, she could also drink it cruelly; she should have not only the lion, but the vampire. These remarks applied to what was only too justly termed the taking of life; but in other cases lives were given, as by the active and enterprising explorer of unknown regions, and the brave and devoted soldier and sailor. These sacrifices we might accept, if the

address which is reported above. A sum of nearly £600 was raised by public subscription, Ruskin acting as treasurer of the fund. The "Jerusalem" was bought from Seddon's widow for 400 guineas for presentation to the National Gallery, and the balance of the fund was paid over to her.

The report of Ruskin's speech first appeared in the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, May 8, 1857, vol. v. pp. 360–362. It was reprinted in *Igdrasil*, vol. iii. pp. 88–92, and thence again reprinted in the privately-printed *Ruskiniana*, Part ii., 1892, pp. 162–166. The short remarks given in this note were also reprinted in both places. The numbering of the paragraphs is added here. The last eight lines of § 11 also appeared in *Memoir and Letters of the late Thomas Seddon, Artist*, 1858 (also 2nd ed., 1859), p. 173.]

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cause in which they were offered was a just one. He had to bring before them that evening an instance of such a sacrifice, and to explain and justify its cause.

4. Mr. Ruskin then graphically reviewed the progress in the art of painting from the eighth and tenth centuries up to the time of Raphael, and exhibited some of the early specimens of English art, which, by their quaintness of design and colouring, created considerable amusement amongst the audience. He also called attention to remarkable specimens around the room of the Pre-Raphaelite style, tracing the development of that style by an analysis of the state of Italian art when the Pre-Raphaelite principle first began to operate upon it. The whole secret of the progress of Italian art from the eighth century up to the time of Raphael, was to be found in the simplicity and truthfulness of the principle followed throughout—simplicity of principle and earnestness of purpose. Art was then unembarrassed by the disputes of critics. There was an intense religious purpose at the root of it, and an intense simplicity of approbation in the minds of the people. They received all that was done frankly, and frankly admired it. There was richness and truth in the decoration, and they never restricted their inventive genius for fear that anything might be overloaded. The richer their work was, the better they liked it. They made their walls as gorgeous as they could; they innocently, and always, loved bright colours and beautiful forms, striving, however, chiefly to add more and more of truthfulness to their representations.

5. It was not the pursuit of beauty that led from "The Serpent beguiling Eve"[1] up to the Madonna of Raphael, but it was the greater accuracy of perception, and greater veracity of the lines, which led the artist on. He need not dwell upon the powers which the Italians had, up to the fifteenth century, of bringing forward the greatest arts. After that period both the principles to which he had adverted were broken through. They reached the climax of power, and then yielded to the abandonment of the principles which led to it. They lost their love of truth, and pursued beauty instead of it. They lost their earnestness of heart, and aimed only at amusement. Hence, in Italy an art falsely beautiful, and in Flanders an art meanly imitative.

6. Modern Pre-Raphaelitism was a reaction against both these errors. It sought veracity more than beauty; but such veracities only as were useful to mankind. Pre-Raphaelitism was simply to be defined as "the pursuit of truth in art, with a useful purpose," and one of the main advantages of its system was to bring into service minds of every class; for, in all ages, there were the two great classes of artists, men of inventive minds, and men of more or less prosaic minds; and the great danger of following the theory of beauty only, was to make the matter-of-fact minds comparatively useless, and yet they were the most common amongst them. There were more men capable of pursuing a simple problem, or representing a simple fact, than there were men capable of following at any distance in the path of the great inventive painters. The object of a nation should be to make all artists equally useful and happy, and to bring the gift of every man into effective service, and make his life honourable, worthy, and useful to the nation to which he belonged.

[1] [See the figure in *Two Paths*, § 31.]

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7. The Pre-Raphaelites had been regarded as one class of men only. He wished to explain to them that they were composed of two entirely separate classes. There were the poetical Pre-Raphaelites and the prosaic Pre-Raphaelites, and the prosaic were the more important of the two. The spirit of the present age was strictly scientific, and all that they could do more than was done in the earlier ages must be on the side of truth, and could not be on the side of imagination. The earlier times were what the brilliant, active imagination of youth was compared to the seriousness and earnestness of old age, when it was earnest—for frivolous old age was the most frivolous of all—but it was most true that as they were aged amongst nations so they might become greater than those which had gone before them, if they brought out the peculiar character which God had impressed upon them. The peculiar power of poetry upon them at present was more or less lost from the quantity supplied. They did not want an unlimited number of poetical fancies, but they wanted a continuous advance in the knowledge of facts; and, without denying the use of all that had been done by our great poets, still they did not want an increase in the quantity of poetry. Their habits were getting more superficial in literature, because they were constantly seeking to add to the stores of imagination, whilst they had not time enough to add to the stores of fact. Thus they were too much neglecting the gifts which had been bequeathed to them by their ancestors, and they would be wiser to turn their attention in some degree away from modern imagination, and preserve more perfectly that which was produced when the nations of Europe were young.

8. Science had brought forward the disposition to test facts more accurately, which was adverse, more or less, to imagination, but which should direct to the grasping of the facts around them; and it was this special direction of painting which, he believed, ought to be cultivated. They too often wasted intellect now by trying to make it imaginative. They might waste the life of a man by leading him to imitate the powers of another; but they could not lead one inventive mind to greater powers than it had originally, or to grasp a greater range than that which God had appointed for it; but what they could do was to prevent persons from wasting their energies, and attempting that of which they were incapable. If they imparted knowledge and industry enough, the imagination would come out. Without knowledge and industry none of those feelings would be nobly or justly expressed.

9. The works of Thomas Seddon had to his (Mr. Ruskin's) mind arisen at a period of momentous importance to the whole of Europe. In proportion, it would seem, as nations advanced in mercantile importance, as commerce advanced, so the influential persons of all countries seemed bent upon destroying whatever stood in the way of modern improvement, and the work of destruction was going on fatally throughout France and Italy. In England it had been accomplished already, but it was taking place, in proportion to the prosperity of a country, over all Europe. Therefore it was that he was anxious that pictures in modern days should be addressed to the representation simply of facts, to the representation either of architecture or scenery, of which the associations were likely to be swept away by what was called modern progress or improvement.[1] This was the cause which the committee

[1] [On this subject, compare Vol. XII. pp. 314, 315.]

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had it in their minds to bring before the Society of Arts on the present occasion. This cause had been advanced by many men, before the sacrifice of Seddon's life. But there was this, at least, of singular and pathetic in what Mr. Seddon had done—that he had turned away, of his own free will, from the paths of imagination to those of historical and matter-of-fact representation. They would see, on one side of the room, the noble picture "Penelope."[1] That was the first which Mr. Seddon painted. It was noble in every possible way. It showed inventive genius of the highest order; yet Mr. Seddon, deliberately measuring his own strength, and measuring the importance of the two tasks which lay at his choice, sternly turned from the temptations of Fancy, and set out on a journey of danger and long self-denial, in order faithfully to record the scenery of the Holy Land.

10. Not only was Seddon peculiar in the direction which he gave to his Pre-Raphaelite endeavours, but it was to be added that Seddon took a peculiar interest in the welfare of the workmen of England. Mr. Ruskin proceeded to narrate the establishment by Seddon, with the co-operation of Neville Warren, of the first school of design in London, called the North London School of Design for workmen, in Camden Town, the principal superintendence of which devolved upon Seddon himself, conjointly with the satisfaction of the other arduous claims upon his time, attention, and hard labour.[2] His great exertions during that period of his life, it was believed, impaired his constitution, and were regarded as the primal cause of the failure of his health in Syria, and his dying there.

11. Mr. Ruskin then entered into a recital of the labours of Seddon in his last great work of "Jerusalem," and concluded by appealing to the Society and those present to aid in doing justice to one of our greatest artists by the recognition of his genius. It was the object of the Committee to purchase for the nation, from Mr. Seddon's widow, his picture of "Jerusalem, with the Mount of Olives," and to present it, in memory of Mr. Seddon, to the National Gallery. The picture was valued at the price of four hundred guineas. A subscription for that purpose had been opened, in which all persons were invited to join who either felt respect for Mr. Seddon's genius, or desired to promote the objects to which he had sacrificed his life. What sum might remain after the picture (poorly valued, Mr. Ruskin thought, at such a price) had been purchased, it was intended by the Committee to ask Mrs. Seddon to accept; and Mr. Ruskin hoped that the Society of Arts, which

[1] [A collection of pictures and sketches by Seddon was exhibited at the Society of Arts on the occasion of Ruskin's address. "Penelope" was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851, but "hung in the very top row, where it could only be seen through an opera-glass"; afterwards in the possession of Mr. George Wilson, of Redgrave Hall, Suffolk. "The pains he took to secure truthfulness in a subject which, by its very nature, seemed to preclude it, were extraordinary. He constructed a model of the apartment in which the heroine is represented, with an opening for the window, with the curtain partition, and with the loom itself; and he hung up a taper in order to study the effect of the double light; and at the British Museum and elsewhere he studied most carefully the costumes and manners of the Greeks" (*Memoir*, pp. 16, 17).]

[2] [Two hundred workmen enrolled themselves as students. Mr. W. Cave Thomas was the master; Mr. J. Neville Warren, the secretary. For an account of Seddon's labours, see the *Memoir*, pp. 10–12. The school made a point, which was then a novelty, of setting the pupils to copy from objects, instead of from drawings (as was then the practice in the Government Schools of Art).]

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had honoured him with their permission to bring these circumstances before them, would set the seal of their approval to the merit of the painter, and thus grant the only comfort which was now possible to his widow, whose sorrow must be deeper and more poignant in proportion to the greatness of the hopes she had cherished, as she watched the unfolding genius of her husband. It was for the Society now to decide whether they would further this noble cause of Truth in Art, while they gave honour to a good and great man, and consolation to those who loved him, or whether they would add one more to the victories of oblivion, and suffer this picture, wrought in the stormy desert of Aceldama, which was the last of his labours, to be also the type of their reward; whether they would suffer the thorn and the thistle to choke the seed that he had sown, and the sand of the desert to weep over his forgotten grave.

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## IV

# LETTERS TO G. F. WATTS, R.A.[1]

## (1860–1866)

### 1

*Saturday evening, 29th September*, 1860.

DEAR WATTS,—I am very glad to have your letter to-night, having been downhearted lately and unable to write to my friends, yet glad of being remembered by them. I have kept a kind letter of Mrs. Prinsep's by me ever so long. It came too late to be answered before the birthday of which it told me.

I will come and sit whenever and wherever and as long as you like. I have nothing whatever to do, and don't mean to have. I hope to be at National Gallery on Tuesday [erased], Wednesday [erased, see end of note], and Thursday afternoons, two to four, not exactly working, but wondering. I entirely feel with you that there is no dodge in Titian. It is simply right doing with a care and dexterity alike unpractised among us nowadays. It is drawing with paint as tenderly as you do with chalk. . . . I suspect that Titian depended on states and times in colouring more than we do; that he left such and such colours for such and such times always before retouching, and so on; but this you would not call dodge—would you?—but merely perfect knowledge of means. It struck me in looking at your group with child in the Academy[2] that you depended too much on blending and too little on handling colour; that you were not simple enough nor quick enough to do all you felt; nevertheless it was very beautiful. I should think you were tormented a little by having too much feeling.

If it is fine to-morrow I have promised to take a drive, but the second fine day, whatever that may be this week, I shall be at Trafalgar Square.

[1] [These letters were first published by Mrs. Richmond Ritchie in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, March 1890, pp. 599, 600, and next reprinted in her *Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning*, 1892, pp. 136–139. They were also reprinted in the privately-issued *Ruskiniana*, 1890, i. 105–107. For Ruskin's early appreciation of Watts, see Vol. XI. p. 30 *n.*]

[2] [No. 86 in the exhibition of 1860: "Mrs. George Cavendish Bentinck and her Children."]



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2

*5th February*, 1861.

MY DEAR WATTS,—Kind thanks for writing to ask for me. I am not unwell materially, but furiously sulky and very quiet over my work, and mean to be so, and having been hitherto a rather voluble and demonstrative person, people think I'm ill. I'm not cheerful, certainly, and don't see how anybody in their senses can be.

I did not say—did I?—that you were not to aim at all qualities; but not all at once. Titian was born of strong race, and with every conceivable human advantage, and probably before he was twelve years old knew all that could be done with oil-painting. We are under every conceivable human disadvantage, and we must be content to go slowly. If you try at present to get all Titian's qualities, you will assuredly get none. You not only have seen Titians and Correggios which united all, but I don't suppose you ever saw a true Titian or Correggio which did not unite all. But that does not in the least warrant you in trying at once to do the same; you have many things to discover which they learned with their alphabet, many things to cure yourself of which their master never allowed them to fall into habit of. For instance, from long drawing with chalk point you have got a mottled and broken execution, and have no power of properly modulating the brush. Well, the way to cure yourself of that is not by trying for Titian or Correggio, whose modulations are so exquisite that they perpetually blend invisibly with the point-work, but take a piece of absolute modulation—the head of the kneeling figure in Sir Joshua's "Three Graces" at Kensington,[1] for instance—and do it twenty times over and over again, restricting yourself wholly to his number of touches and thereabouts. Then you will feel exactly where you are, and what is the obstacle in that direction to be vanquished; you will feel progress every day, and be happy in it; while, when you try for everything, you never know what is stopping you. Again, the chalk drawing has materially damaged your perception of the subtlest qualities of local colour. When a form is shown by a light of one colour and a reflex of another, both equal in depth, if we are drawing in chalk we must exaggerate either one or the other, or the form must be invisible. The habit of exaggeration is fatal to the colour vision; to conquer it you should paint the purest and subtlest coloured objects on a small scale till you can realise them thoroughly. I say on a small scale; otherwise the eye does not come to feel the value of points of hue. This exercise, nearly the reverse of the modulation exercise, could not be healthily carried on together with it. And so on with others.

I write with an apparently presumptuous positiveness, but my own personal experience of every sort of feebleness is so great that I have a *right* to do so on points connected with it.

Sincere regards to all friends.

Ever affectionately yours,
J. R.

[1] [Now at the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, No. 79.]

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3

DENMARK HILL, S.,
*Wednesday, 25th July*, 1866.

MY DEAR WATTS,—I heard to-day from Edward[1] that he thought you would like to come and see me—or me to come to you.

You have not been here for ever so long. Can you come out any day to breakfast?—and we'll have a nice talk—or would you rather I should come in the afternoon? I rarely stir in the morning. I want to see you. I've been very ill and sad lately, or should have managed it.

Send me just a line to say what day you could come, or see me.

Ever yours affectionately,
J. RUSKIN.

Ned says you have been doing beautiful things. And therefore I should like to come, as you won't exhibit and leave Maclise's "Death of Nelson"[2] to edify the public. . . .

[1] [Burne-Jones.]
[2] [A large fresco in the Royal, or Victoria, Gallery, in the Houses of Parliament—completed by Maclise, after great labour, in 1864: see below, p. 488.]

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V

# THE REFLECTION OF RAINBOWS IN WATER[1]

## TO THE EDITOR OF THE *LONDON REVIEW*

SIR,—I do not think there is much difficulty in the rainbow business. We cannot see the reflection of the same rainbow which we behold in the sky, but we see the reflection of another invisible one within it. Suppose A and B, Fig. 1, are two falling raindrops, and the spectator is at S, and X Y

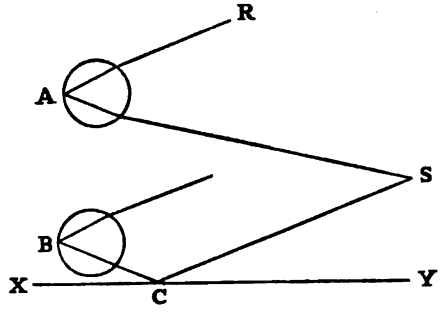


*Fig.* 1

is the water surface. If R A S be a sun ray giving, we will say, the red ray in the visible rainbow, the ray, B C S, will give the same red ray, reflected from the water at C.

It is rather a long business to examine the lateral angles, and I have

[1] [This letter appeared in the *London Review*, May 16, 1861, and was reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. pp. 299–301. The *London Review* of May 4 had contained a critique of the Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, which included a notice of Mr. Duncan's "Shiplake, on the Thames" (No. 52), for which artist, see above, p. 81. In this picture the artist had painted a rainbow reflected in the water, the truth of which to nature was questioned by some of his critics. Ruskin's was not the only letter in support of the picture's truth. On the general subject, see the Introduction, above, p. xxxvii. The reflection of rainbows is discussed (to the same effect as here) at pp. 21–24 of Sir Montagu Pollock's book there referred to.]



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not time to do it; but I presume the result would be that if a m b, Fig. 2, be the visible rainbow, and x y the water horizon, the reflection will be the dotted line c e d, reflecting, that is to say, the invisible bow, c n d; thus, the terminations of the arcs of the visible and reflected bows do not coincide.

The interval, m n, depends on the position of the spectator with respect

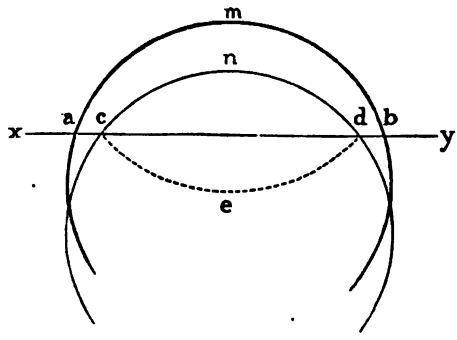


*Fig.* 2

to the water surface. The thing can hardly ever be seen in nature, for if there be rain enough to carry the bow to the water surface, that surface will be ruffled by the drops, and incapable of reflection.

Whenever I have seen a rainbow over water (sea, mostly), it has stood on it reflectionless; but interrupted conditions of rain might be imagined which would present reflection on near surfaces.

Always very truly yours,

J. RUSKIN.

*7th May*, 1861.

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# VI

# THE ROYAL ACADEMY COMMISSION[1]

## EVIDENCE OF JOHN RUSKIN, MONDAY, JUNE 8, 1863

1. *Chairman.* You have, no doubt, frequently considered the position of the Royal Academy in this country?—Yes.

2. Is it in all points satisfactory to you?—No, certainly not.

3. Do you approve, for example, of the plan by which, on a vacancy occurring, the Royal Academicians supply that vacancy, or would you wish to see that election confided to any other hands?—I should wish to see the election confided to other hands. I think that all elections are liable to mistake, or mischance, when the electing body elect the candidate

[1] [This report of Ruskin's evidence first appeared in "*The Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Present Position of the Royal Academy in Relation to the Fine Arts.*" London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1863 (pp. 546–555. Questions 5079–5142). The Commission consisted of Earl Stanhope (*Chairman*), Viscount Hardinge, Lord Elcho, Sir E. W. Head, Mr. William Stirling, Mr. H. D. Seymour, and Mr. Henry Reeve, all of whom, except Mr. Seymour, were present at the above sitting. The evidence was reprinted in *On the Old Road*, 1885, vol. i. pp. 602–623 (§§ 459–482), and again in the second edition of that work, vol. ii. pp. 215–242 (§§ 168–191). The questions are here re-numbered.

The following analysis of the above evidence was given in the Index to the Report (pp. 139, 140):—

1–8. The Academy not in all points satisfactory. Would wish to see the Academicians not self-elected.—But by a constituency consisting both of artists and the public.—Public influence to be the same in painting as in music.

9, 10. As to the Associates: is in favour of some period of probation.—Their class to be unlimited, with a very limited number of Academicians.

11, 12, 36, 49–55. Has formed no opinion on the question of introducing laymen into the Academy; in matters of revenue they might be joined with artists, but not in the selection and hanging of pictures: opposed on the whole to their introduction, considering the present state of art education.

13. As he would like to see the Academy constituted, thinks the president ought to be an artist.

14–16. General effect of the Academy's teaching upon the art of the country merely nugatory.—Would have a much more comprehensive system of teaching.

17. The Academy education to correspond wholly to the University education.

18. Not easy but very necessary for the Academy to adopt an authoritative sys of teaching.

21. His idea of what the Academy teaching should be; would have a school of chemistry.

22, 23. The teaching of wall-painting in permanent materials should be a branch, possibly the principal branch.



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into them. I rather think that elections are only successful where the candidate is elected into a body other than the body of electors; but I have not considered the principles of election fully enough to be able to give any positive statement of opinion upon that matter. I only feel that at present the thing is liable to many errors and mischances.

4. Does it not seem, however, that there are some precedents, such, for example, as the Institute of France, in which the body electing to the vacancies that occur within it keeps up a very high character, and enjoys a great reputation?—There are many such precedents; and, as every such body for its own honour must sometimes call upon the most intellectual men of the country to join it, I should think that every such body must retain a high character where the country itself has a proper sense of the worth of its best men; but the system of election may be wrong, though the sense of the country may be right; and I think, in appealing to a precedent to justify a system, we should estimate properly what has been brought about by the feeling of the country. We are all, I fancy, too much in the habit of looking to forms as the cause of what really is caused by the temper of the nation at the particular time, working, through the forms, for good or evil.

5. If, however, the election of Academicians were to be confided to artists who were not already Academicians themselves, would it be easy to meet this objection, that they would have in many cases a

25–27. Not satisfied with the selection of artists to be members of the Academy.

28. In some cases the selection of pictures has been injudicious, but this a matter of small importance; the main point is how the pictures that are admitted are to be best seen.

29, 30. In favour of an educational test for candidates for admission into the Academy.

31. And of professors of art at the Universities.

32, 33. Causes of the want of refinement observable in many modern pictures; the large prices they fetch harmful.

34. Teaching by visitors constantly changing mischievous.

36. How a picture should be hung.

37. An ill-worked picture ought not to be admitted by the Academy.

38. Bearing of this last opinion upon the present Exhibition.

42–44. Would have works of sculpture placed permanently in the painting-room, but not any of those sent in for the Exhibition of the year.

48. In favour of the present honorary members being made of use in their positions.[1]

53. Desirable that Government grants should be made to obtain for the pupils of the Academy beautiful examples of every kind of art.

56, 57. In favour of separate exhibitions of the works of Associates (or Graduates) and Academicians.

58–60. In favour of art-fellowships, but not of a fixed school in connection with the Academy at Rome.

61, 62. Comparison of the French and English systems (as regards assistance from pupils) in the production of great public paintings.

63. How the works of the Italian masters were executed.—Desirable that pupils should be trained to assist great masters in public works.]

[1] [Here, *On the Old Road* (both editions) inserted the words: "Introduction of laymen into the Academy deprecated under present circumstances, and why.—Present feeling towards art and artists at the Universities."]

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personal interest in the question; that each might be striving for his own admission to that distinction; whereas, when the election takes place among those who have already attained that distinction, direct personal interest at all events is absent?—I should think personal interest would act in a certain sense in either case; it would branch into too many subtleties of interest to say in what way it would act. I should think that it would be more important to the inferior body to decide rightly upon those who were to govern them, than to the superior body to decide upon those who were to govern other people; and that the superior body would therefore generally choose those who were likely to be pleasant to themselves;—pleasant, either as companions, or in carrying out a system which they chose for their own convenience to adopt; while the inferior body would choose men likely to carry out the system that would tend most to the general progress of art.

6. As I understand you, though you have a decided opinion that it would be better for some other constituent body to elect the members of the Royal Academy, you have not a decided opinion as to how that constituent body would best be composed?—By no means.

7. I presume you would wish that constituent body to consist of artists, though you are not prepared to say precisely how they should be selected?—I should like the constituent body to consist both of artists and of the public. I feel great difficulties in offering any suggestion as to the manner in which the electors should elect: but I should like the public as well as artists to have a voice, so that we might have the public feeling brought to bear upon painting as we have now upon music; and that the election of those who were to attract the public eye, or direct the public mind, should indicate also the will of the public in some respects; not that I think that "will" always wise, but I think you would then have pointed out in what way those who are teaching the public should best regulate the teaching; and also it would give the public itself an interest in art, and a sense of responsibility, which in the present state of things they never can have.

8. Will you explain more fully the precedent of music to which you have just adverted?—The fame of any great singer or any great musician depends upon the public enthusiasm and feeling respecting him. No Royal Academy can draw a large audience to the opera by stating that such and such a piece of music is good, or that such and such a voice is clear; if the public do not feel the voice to be delicious, and if they do not like the music, they will not go to hear it. The fame of the musician, whether singer, instrumentalist, or composer, is founded mainly upon his having produced a strong effect upon the public intellect and imagination. I should like that same effect to be produced by painters, and to be expressed by the public enthusiasm and approbation; not merely by expressions of approbation in conversation, but by the actual voice which in the theatre is given by the shout and by the clapping of the hands. You cannot clap a picture, nor clap a painter at his work, but I should like the public in some way to bring their voice to bear upon the painter's work.

9. Have you formed any opinion upon the position of the Associates in the Royal Academy?—I have thought of it a little, but the present system

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of the Academy is to me so entirely nugatory, it produces so little effect in any way (what little effect it does produce being in my opinion mischievous), that it has never interested me; and I have felt the difficulty so greatly, that I never, till your lordship's letter reached me, paid much attention to it. I always thought it would be a waste of time to give much time to thinking how it might be altered; so that as to the position of Associates I can say little, except that I think, in any case, there ought to be some period of probation, and some advanced scale of dignity, indicative of the highest attainments in art, which should be only given to the oldest and most practised painters.

10. From the great knowledge which you possess of British art, looking to the most eminent painters, sculptors, and architects at this time, should you say that the number of the Royal Academy is sufficient fully to represent them, or would you recommend an increase in the present number of Academicians?—I have not considered in what proportion the Academicianships at present exist. That is rather a question bearing upon the degree of dignity which one would be glad to confer. I should like the highest dignity to be limited, but I should like the inferior dignity corresponding to the Associateship to be given, as the degrees are given in the universities, without any limitation of number, to those possessing positive attainments and skill. I should think a very limited number of Academicianships would always meet all the requirements of the highest intellect of the country.

11. Have you formed any opinion upon the expediency of entrusting laymen with some share in the management of the affairs of the Academy?—No, I have formed no opinion upon that matter. I do not know what there is at present to be managed in the Academy. I should think if the Academy is to become an available school, laymen cannot be joined in the management of that particular department. In matters of revenue, and in matters concerning the general interests and dignity of the Academy, they might be.

12. Should you think that non-professional persons would be fitly associated with artists in such questions as the selection and hanging of the pictures sent in for exhibition?—No, I think not.

13. Some persons have suggested that the president of the Academy should not always nor of necessity be himself an artist; should you approve of any system by which a gentleman of high social position, not an artist, was placed at the head of such a body as the Academy?—"Of such a body as the Academy," if I may be permitted to repeat your words, must of course have reference to the constitution to be given to it. As at present constituted, I do not know what advantage might or might not be derived from such a gentleman being appointed president. As I should like to see it constituted, I think he ought to be an artist only.

14. Have you had any reason to observe or to make yourself acquainted with the working of the schools of the Royal Academy?—Yes, I have observed it. I have not made myself acquainted with the actual methods of teaching at present in use, but I know the general effect upon the art of the country.

15. What should you say was that effect?—Nearly nugatory: exceedingly painful in this respect, that the teaching of the Academy separates, as

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the whole idea of the country separates, the notion of art-education from other education, and when you have made that one fundamental mistake, all others follow. You teach a young man to manage his chalk and his brush—not always that—but having done that, you suppose you have made a painter of him; whereas to educate a painter is the same thing as to educate a clergyman or a physician—you must give him a liberal education primarily, and that must be connected with the kind of learning peculiarly fit for his profession. That error is partly owing to our excessively vulgar and excessively shallow English idea that the artist's profession is not, and cannot be, a liberal one. We respect a physician, and call him a gentleman, because he can give us a purge and clean out our stomachs; but we do not call an artist a gentleman, whom we expect to invent for us the face of Christ. When we have made that primary mistake, all other mistakes in education are trivial in comparison. The very notion of an art academy should be, a body of teachers of the youth who are to be the guides of the nation through its senses; and that is a very important means of guiding it. We have done a good deal through dinners, but we may some day do a good deal more through pictures.

16. You would have a more comprehensive system of teaching?—Much more comprehensive.

17. Do I rightly understand you that you would wish it to embrace branches of liberal education in general, and not be merely confined to specific artistic studies?—Certainly. I would have the Academy education corresponding wholly to the university education. The schools of the country ought to teach the boy the first conditions of manipulation. He should come up, I say not at what age, but probably at about fourteen or fifteen, to the central university of art, wherever that was established; and then, while he was taught to paint and to carve and to work in metal—just as in old times he would have been taught to manage the sword and lance, they being the principal business of his life,—during the years from fifteen to twenty, the chief attention of his governors should be to make a gentleman of him in the highest sense; and to give him an exceedingly broad and liberal education, which should enable him not only to work nobly, but to conceive nobly.

18. As to the point, however, of artistic manipulation, is not it the fact that many great painters have differed, and do differ, from each other, and would it therefore be easy for the Academy to adopt any authoritative system of teaching, excluding one mode and acknowledging another?—Not easy, but very necessary. There have been many methods; but there has never been a case of a great school which did not fix upon its method: and there has been no case of a thoroughly great school which did not fix upon the right method, as far as circumstances enabled it to do so.[1] The meaning of a successful school is, that it has adopted a method which it teaches to its young painters, so that right working becomes a habit with them; so that with no thought, and no effort, and no torment, and no talk about it, they have the habit of doing what their school teaches them.

19. You do not think a system is equally good which leaves to each eminent professor, according to the bent of his genius or the result of his

[1] [On the deficiencies of the Academy's teaching in this respect, compare Vol. XII p. 253 *n.*]

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experience, to instruct young men, the instruction varying with the character of each professor?—Great benefit would arise if each professor founded his own school, and were interested in his own pupils; but, as has been sufficiently illustrated in the schools of Domenichino and Guido, there is apt to arise rivalry between the masters, with no correlative advantages, unless the masters are all of one mind. And the only successful idea of an academy has been where the practice was consistent, and where there was no contradiction. Considering the knowledge we now have, and the means we now have of comparing all the works of the greatest painters, though, as you suggest by your question, it is not easy to adopt an authoritative system, yet it is perfectly possible. Let us get at the best method and let us teach that. There is unquestionably a best way if we can find it; and we have now in England the means of finding it out.

20. The teaching in the Academy is now, under all circumstances, gratuitous; would you wish that system to continue, or should you prefer to see a system of payment?—I am not prepared to answer that question. It would depend upon the sort of system that was adopted and on the kind of persons you received into your schools.

21. I presume you would say that in artistic teaching there are some points on which there would be common ground, and others upon which there must be specific teaching; for instance, in sculpture and painting there is a point up to which the proportions of the human figure have to be studied, but afterwards there is a divergence between the two arts of chiselling marble and laying colours on the canvas?—Certainly. I should think all that might be arranged in an Academy system very simply. You would have first your teaching of drawing with the soft point; and associated with that, chiaroscuro: you would then have the teaching of drawing with the hard or black point, involving the teaching of the best system of engraving, and all that was necessary to form your school of engravers: you would then proceed to metal work; and on working in metal you would found your school of sculpture, and on that your school of architecture: and finally, and above all, you would have your school of painting, including oil painting and fresco painting, and all painting in permanent material; (not comprising painting in any material that was not permanent:) and with that you would associate your school of chemistry, which should teach what was permanent and what was not; which school of chemistry should declare authoritatively, with the Academy's seal, what colours would stand and what process would secure their standing: and should have a sort of Apothecaries' Hall where anybody who required them could procure colours in the purest state; all these things being organised in one great system, and only possibly right by their connexion and in their connexion.

22. Do you approve of the encouragement which of late years has been given to fresco painting, and do you look forward to much extension of that branch of art in England?—I found when I was examining the term "fresco painting," that it was a wide one, that none of us seemed to know quite the limitation or extent of it; and after giving a good deal more time to the question I am still less able to answer distinctly on an understanding of the term "fresco painting": but using the term "decorative painting, applicable to walls in permanent materials," I think it essential that every



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great school should include as one of its main objects the teaching of wall painting in permanent materials, and on a large scale.

23. You think it should form a branch of the system of teaching in the Academy?—I think it should form a branch of the teaching in the Academy, possibly the principal branch.

24. Does it, so far as you know, form a separate branch of teaching in any of the foreign academies?—I do not know.

25. Looking generally, and of course without mentioning any names, have you in the course of the last few years been generally satisfied with the selection of artists into the Royal Academy?—No, certainly not.

26. Do you think that some artists of merit have been excluded, or that artists whom you think not deserving of that honour have been elected?—More that artists not deserving of the honour have been elected. I think it does no harm to any promising artist to be left out of the Academy, but it does harm to the public sometimes that an unpromising artist should be let into it.

27. You think there have been cases within the last few years in which persons, in your judgment, not entitled to that distinction have nevertheless been elected?—Certainly.

28. With respect to the selection of pictures for the exhibition, are you satisfied in general with that selection, or have you in particular instances seen ground to think that it has been injudiciously exercised?—In some cases it has been injudiciously exercised, but it is a matter of small importance; it causes heartburning probably, but little more. If a rejected picture is good, the public will see it some day or other, and find out that it is a good picture. I care little about what pictures are let in or not, but I do care about seeing the pictures that are let in. The main point, which every one would desire to see determined, is how the pictures that are admitted are to be best seen. No picture deserving of being seen at all should be so hung as to give you any pain or fatigue in seeing it. If you let a picture into the room at all, it should not be hung so high as that either the feelings of the artist or the neck of the public should be hurt.

29. (*Viscount Hardinge.*) I gather from your evidence that you would wish to see the Royal Academy a sort of central university to which young men from other institutions should be sent. Assuming that there were difficulties in the way of carrying that out, do you think, under the present system, you could exact from young men who are candidates for admission into the Royal Academy, some educational test?—Certainly; I think much depends upon that. If the system of education which I have been endeavouring to point out were adopted, you would have in every one of those professions very practised workmen. You could not have any of this education carried out, unless you had thoroughly practised workmen; and you should fix your pass as you fix your university pass, and you should pass a man in architecture, sculpture, and painting, because he knows his business, and knows as much of any other science as is necessary for his profession. You require a piece of work from him, and you examine him, and then you pass him,—call him whatever you like;—but you say to the public, Here is a workman in this branch who will do your work well.

30. You do not think there would in such a system be any risk of excluding men who might hereafter be great men, who under such a system

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might not be able to pass?—There are risks in every system, but I think every man worth anything would pass. A great many who would be good for nothing would pass, but your really great man would assuredly pass.

31. Has it ever struck you that it would be advantageous to art if there were at the universities professors of art who might give lectures and give instruction to young men who might desire to avail themselves of it, as you have lectures on botany and geology?—Yes, assuredly. The want of interest on the part of the upper classes in art has been very much at the bottom of the abuses which have crept into all systems of education connected with it. If the upper classes could only be interested in it by being led into it when young, a great improvement might be looked for; therefore I feel the expediency of such an addition to the education of our universities.

32. Is not that want of refinement which may be observed in many of the pictures from time to time exhibited in the Royal Academy to be attributed in a great measure to the want of education amongst artists?—It is to be attributed to that, and to the necessity which artists are under of addressing a low class of spectators: an artist to live must catch the public eye. Our upper classes supply a very small amount of patronage to artists at present, their main patronage being from the manufacturing districts and from the public interested in engravings;—an exceedingly wide sphere, but a low sphere,—and you catch the eye of that class much more by pictures having reference to their amusements than by any noble subject better treated, and the better treated it was the less it would interest that class.

33. Is it not often the case that pictures exhibiting such a want of refinement, at the same time fetch large prices amongst what I may call the mercantile patrons of art?—Certainly; and, the larger the price, the more harm done of course to the school, for that is a form of education you cannot resist. Plato said long ago, when you have your demagogue against you no human form of education can resist that.[1]

34. (*Sir E. Head.*) What is your opinion of the present mode of teaching in the life school and the painting school, namely, by visitors constantly changing?—I should think it mischievous. The unfortunate youths, I should imagine, would just get what they could pick up; it would be throwing them crumbs very much as you throw bones to the animals in the Zoological Gardens.

35. Do you conceive that anything which can be properly called a school, is likely to be formed where the teaching is conducted in that way?—Assuredly not.

36. You stated that in the event of the introduction of lay members into the Academy, you would not think it desirable that they should take part in the selection or hanging of pictures for exhibition. Is not there a great distinction between the selection of the pictures and the hanging of the pictures, and might not they take part in the one without taking part in the other?—I should think hardly. My notion of hanging a picture

[1] [The reference seems to be to Plato's *Republic*, viii. 563, where it is said that under democracy "the master fears and flatters his scholars, and the scholars despise their masters and tutors; and in general young and old are alike," etc.]

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is to put it low enough to be seen. If small it should be placed near the eye. Anybody can hang a picture, but the question should be, is there good painting enough in this picture to make it acceptable to the public, or to make it just to the artist to show it? And none but artists can quite judge of the workmanship which should entitle it to enter the Academy.

37. Do you think it depends solely upon the workmanship?—Not by any means solely, but I think that is the first point that should be looked to. An ill-worked picture ought not to be admitted; let it be exhibited elsewhere if you will, but your Academy has no business to let bad work pass. If a man cannot carve or paint, though his work may be well conceived, do not let his work pass.[1] Unless you require good work in your Academy exhibition, you can form no school.

38. (*Mr. Reeve.*) Applying the rule you have just laid down, would the effect be to exclude a considerable proportion of the works now exhibited in the Academy?—Yes; more of the Academicians' than of others.

39. (*Sir E. Head.*) Selection now being made by technical artists?—No. Professional?—Yes.

40. (*Lord Elcho.*) Do you think that none but professional artists are capable of judging of the actual merit or demerit of a painting?—Non-professional persons may offer a very strong opinion upon the subject, which may happen to be right,—or which may be wrong.

41. Your opinion is that the main thing with respect to the exhibition is, that the pictures should be seen; that they should not be hung too high or too low. That question has been already raised before the Commission, and it has been suggested that two feet from the ground should be the minimum height for the base of the picture, and some witnesses have said that six feet and others eight feet should be the maximum height for the base of the picture; what limit would you fix?—I should say that the horizontal line in the perspective of the picture ought always to be opposite the spectator's eye, no matter what the height may be from the floor. If the horizontal line is so placed that it must be above the spectator's eye, in consequence of the size of the picture, it cannot be helped, but I would always get the horizontal line opposite the eye if possible.

42. (*Chairman.*) Should you concur in the suggestion which a witness[2] has made before this Commission, that it would be an improvement, if the space admitted of it, that works of sculpture should be intermixed in the same apartment with works of painting, instead of being kept as at present in separate apartments?—I should think it would be very delightful to have some works of sculpture mixed with works of painting; that it would make the exhibition more pleasing, and that the eye would be rested sometimes by turning from the colours to the marble, and would see the colours of the paintings better in return. Sir Joshua Reynolds mentions the power which some of the Flemish pictures seemed to derive, in his opinion, by looking at them after having consulted his note-book.[3] Statuary placed among the

[1] [On this subject, see above, Introduction, p. xxvi.]

[2] [The witness was Ruskin's friend, Edmund Oldfield, who submitted a letter on the subject to the Commission (see pp. 439–440 of the Report).]

[3] [Reynolds made this observation in connexion with his second visit to the Netherlands. "On viewing the works of Rubens a second time, they appeared to

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pictures would have the same effect. I would not have the sculpture that was sent in for the exhibition of the year exhibited with the paintings, but I would have works of sculpture placed permanently in the painting rooms.[1]

43. (*Lord Elcho.*) Supposing there were no works of sculpture available for being placed in the rooms permanently, and supposing among the works sent in for annual exhibition there were works of a character fit to be placed among the paintings, should you see any objection to their being so placed? — That would cause an immense amount of useless trouble, and perpetual quarrels among the sculptors, as to whose works were entitled to be placed in the painting rooms or not.

44. Are you aware that in the exhibition in Paris in 1855, that was the system adopted? — No. If the French adopted it, it was likely to be useful, and doubtless they would carry it out very cleverly; but we have not the knack of putting the right things in the right places by any means.

45. Did you see our own International Exhibition last year?—No.

46. Are you aware that a similar system was resorted to in the exhibition of pictures there?—I should think in our exhibitions we must put anything where it would go, in the sort of way that we manage them.

47. At the present moment there are on the books of the Academy five honorary members, who hold certain titular offices, Earl Stanhope being antiquary to the Academy, Mr. Grote being professor of ancient history, Dean Milman being professor of ancient literature, the Bishop of Oxford being chaplain, and Sir Henry Holland being secretary for foreign correspondence; these professors never deliver any lectures and have no voice whatever in the management, but have mere honorary titular distinctions; should you think it desirable that gentlemen of their position and character should have a voice in the management of the affairs of the Academy? — It would be much more desirable that they should give lectures upon the subjects with which they are acquainted. I should think Earl Stanhope and all the gentlemen you have mentioned, would be much happier in feeling that they were of use in their positions; and that if you gave them something to do they would very nobly do it. If you give them nothing to do I think they ought not to remain in the institution.

48. It has been suggested that the Academy now consisting of forty-two might be increased advantageously to fifty professional members, architecture, sculpture, and painting being fairly represented, and that in addition to those fifty there might be elected or nominated somehow or other ten non-professional persons, that is, men taking an interest in art, who had a certain position and standing in the country, and who might take an active

him much colder in tone than on the former occasion, and he could not at first account for this circumstance; 'but he afterwards recollected,' says Mr. Malone, 'that when he first saw them he had his note-book in his hand, for the purpose of writing down short remarks, and imagined that as the eye passed quickly from the paper to the pictures, the colours derived a greater degree of richness and warmth from the contrast than they subsequently appeared to possess when viewed without this foil'" ("Memoir of Sir Joshua Reynolds," prefixed to the edition of his *Literary Works*, by H. W. Beechey, vol. i. p. 242: Bohn's ed., 1852).]

[1] [On this subject, compare Ruskin's evidence to the National Gallery Commission in 1857, Vol. XIII. pp. 539, 540.]

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part in the management of the affairs of the institution, so tending to bring the Royal Academy and the public together?—I do not know enough of society to be able to form an opinion upon the subject.

49. Irrespective of society, as a question of art, you know enough of non-professional persons interested in art to judge as to whether the infusion of such an element into the Academy might be of advantage to the Academy and to art generally?—I think if you educate our upper classes to take more interest in art, which implies, of course, to know something about it, they might be most efficient members of the Academy; but if you leave them, as you leave them now, to the education which they get at Oxford and Cambridge, and give them the sort of scorn which all the teaching there tends to give, for art and artists, the less they have to do with an academy of art the better.

50. Assuming that, at present, you have not a very great number of those persons in the country, do you not think that the mere fact of the adoption of such a principle in any reform in the constitution of the Academy might have the effect of turning attention more to this matter at the Universities, and leading to the very thing which you think so desirable?—No, I should think not. It would only at present give the impression that the whole system was somewhat artificial, and that it was to remain ineffective.

51. Notwithstanding the neglect of this matter at the Universities, do you think, at the present moment, you could not find ten non-professional persons, of the character you would think desirable, to add to the Academy?—If I may be so impertinent, I may say that you as one of the upper classes, and I as a layman in the lower classes, are tolerably fair examples of the kind of persons who take an interest in art, and I think both of us would do a great deal of mischief if we had much to do with the Academy.

52. Assuming those two persons to be appointed lay members, will you state in what way you think they would do mischief in the councils of the Academy?—We should be disturbing elements, whereas what I should try to secure, if I had anything to do with its arrangements, would be entire tranquillity, a regular system of tuition in which there should be little excitement, and little operation of popular, aristocratic, or any other disturbing influence; none of criticism, and therefore none of tiresome people like myself;—none of money patronage, or even of aristocratic patronage. The whole aim of the teachers should be to produce work which could be demonstrably shown to be good and useful, and worthy of being bought, or used in any way; and after that the whole question of patronage and interest should be settled. The school should teach its art-grammar thoroughly in everything, and in every material, and should teach it carefully; and that could be done if a perfect system were adopted, and above all, if a few thoroughly good examples were put before the students. That is a point which I think of very great importance. I think it very desirable that grants should be made by the Government to obtain for the pupils of the Academy beautiful examples of every kind, the very loveliest and best; not too many; and that their minds should not be confused by having placed before them examples of all schools and times; they are confused enough by what they see in the shops, and in the annual exhibitions. Let engraving be taught by Marc Antonio and Albert Dürer,—painting by Giorgione, Paul Veronese, Titian and Velasquez,—and sculpture

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by good Greek and selected Roman examples, and let there be no question of other schools or their merits. Let those things be shown as good and right, and let the student be trained in those principles:—if afterwards he strikes out an original path, let him; but do not let him torment himself and other people with his originalities, till he knows what is right, so far as is known at present.

53. You are opposed, on the whole, to the introduction of the lay element?—Yes; but I am opposed strongly or distinctly to it, because I have not knowledge enough of society to know how it would work.

54. Your not being in favour of it results from your belief that the lay element that would be useful to the Academy does not at present exist in this country; but you think, if it did exist, and if it could be made to grow out of our schools and universities by art teaching, it might, with advantage to the Academy and to artists, be introduced into the Academy?—Yes.

55. Supposing the class of Royal Academicians to be retained, and that you had fifty Royal Academicians, should you think it desirable that their works should be exhibited by themselves, so that the public might see together the works of those considered to be the first artists of this country?—Certainly, I should like all pictures to be well seen, but I should like one department of the exhibition to be given to the Associates or Graduates. I use that term because I suppose those Associates to have a degree given them for a certain amount of excellence, and any person who had attained that degree should be allowed to send in so many pictures. Then the pictures sent in by persons who had attained the higher honour of Royal Academician should be separately exhibited.

56. That would act as a stimulus to them to keep up their position and show themselves worthy of the honour?—Yes. I do not think they ought to be mixed at all as they are now.

57. What is your opinion with reference to the present system of travelling studentships?—I think it might be made very useful indeed.

58. On the one hand it has been suggested that there should be, as is the system adopted by the French Academy, a permanent professor at Rome to look after the students; on the other hand it has been said that it is not desirable, if you have those travelling studentships, that the students should go to Rome, that it is better for them to travel, and to go to Venice or Lombardy, and to have no fixed school in connexion with the Academy at Rome. To which of those two systems do you give the preference?—I should prefer the latter; if a man goes to travel, he ought to travel, and not be plagued with schools.

59. It has been suggested that fellowships might be given to rising artists, pecuniary assistance being attached to those fellowships, the artist being required annually to send in some specimen of his work to show what he was doing, but it being left optional with him to go abroad or to work at home; should you think that would be desirable, or as has been suggested in a letter by Mr. Armitage,[1] supposing those fellowships to be established for four years, that two of those years should be spent abroad and two at home?—Without entering into any detail as to whether two

[1] [Edward Armitage, R.A., for whom see above, p. 268. His letter, together with a Draft Proposal for the Reform of the Academy, are at pp. 64, 65 of the Report.]

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years should be spent abroad and two years at home, I feel very strongly that one of the most dangerous and retarding influences you have operating upon art is the enormous power of money, and the chances of entirely winning or entirely losing, that is, of making your fortune in a year by a large taking picture, or else starving for ten years by very good small ones. The whole life of an artist is a lottery, and a very wild lottery, and the best artist is liable to be warped away from what he knows is right by the chance of at once making a vast fortune by catching the public eye, the public eye being only to be caught by bright colours and certain conditions of art not always desirable. If, therefore, connected with the Academy schools there could be the means of giving a fixed amount of income to certain men, who would as a consideration for that income furnish a certain number of works that might be agreed upon, or undertake any national work that might be agreed upon, that I believe would be the healthiest way in which a good painter could be paid. To give him his bread and cheese, and so much a day, and say, Here are such and such things we want you to do, is, I believe, the healthiest, simplest, and happiest way in which great work can be produced. But whether it is compatible with our present system I cannot say, nor whether every man would not run away as soon as he found he could get two or three thousand pounds by painting a catching picture. I think your best men would not.

60. You would be in favour of those fellowships?—Yes.

61. I gather that you are in favour of the encouragement of mural decoration, fresco painting, and so forth. The system that prevails abroad, in France, for instance, is for painters to employ pupils to work under them. It was in that way that Delaroche painted his hemicycle at the Académie des Beaux-Arts,[1] employing four pupils, who worked for him, and who from his small sketch drew the full-sized picture on the walls, which was subsequently corrected by him. They then coloured it up to his sketch, after which he shut himself up again, and completed it. On the other hand, if you go to the Victoria Gallery in the House of Lords, you find Mr. Maclise at work on a space of wall forty-eight feet long, painting the Death of Nelson on the deck of the *Victory*, every figure being life size, the deck of the ship and the ropes and everything being the actual size, and you see him painting with his own hand each little bit of rope and the minutest detail.[2] Which of the two systems do you think is the soundest and most calculated to produce great and noble work?—The first is the best for the pupils, the other is the best for the public. But unquestionably not only can a great work be executed as Mr. Maclise is executing his, but no really great work was executed otherwise, for in all mighty work, whether in fresco or oil, every touch and hue of colour to the last corner has been put on lovingly by the painter's own hand, not leaving to a pupil to paint so much as a pebble under a horse's foot.

62. Do you believe that most of the works of the great masters in Italy

[1] [On this encaustic painting, representing celebrated artists of all ages and nations and containing seventy-five colossal figures, Delaroche and his assistants were employed for three and a half years. Among his assistants was Mr. Armitage, who (in the letter mentioned in the preceding note) gives an interesting account of their manner of work.]

[2] [See above, p. 473.]

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were so executed?—No; because the pupils were nearly as mighty as the masters. Great men took such an interest in their work, and they were so modest and simple that they were repeatedly sacrificing themselves to the interests of their religion or of the society they were working for; and when a thing was to be done in a certain time it could only be done by bringing in aid; but whenever precious work was to be done, then the great man said, "Lock me up here by myself, give me a little wine and cheese, and come in a month, and I will show you what I have done."

63. Do you think it desirable that the pupils should be so trained as to be capable of assisting great masters in such works?—Assuredly.

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## VII

# MODERN CARICATURE[1]

## (1883, 1888)

### 1. A LETTER ADDRESSED TO FRANZ GOEDECKER[2]

BRANTWOOD, *March 28th*, 1883.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am greatly interested by the photographs you have sent me from your very clever drawings, but they are to me anything but "jokes." I see no matter of merriment either in the weakness of age or the abortions of vulgar form; and I sincerely hope that you will not waste your real powers in pandering to the malice or the stupidity of those people who *do*. If you add to your present gift of seizing grotesque or abnormal character the skill proper to a painter, you might take a position of most useful influence in representing the evils and dangers of our great cities and manufactories: and you might win for yourself such an honourable fame as that of Hogarth, instead of the momentary praise of amusing the idleness of evening parties.

Believe me, faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

### 2. "THE IRISH GREEN BOOK"[3]

SANDGATE, *January* 13, 1888.

SIR,—I am extremely obliged by your having sent me the "Green Book," as it informs me of things which I am unable, in the time at my disposal, to ascertain; and cannot venture, until some evidence like this

[1] [On the subject of caricature generally, compare Appendix i. in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. pp. 469–474).]

[2] [The "Goe" of *Vanity Fair*. The letter was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 18, 1888 (4th ed.), and again in that of January 23, 1890. It was reprinted in *Igdrasil*, 1890, vol. i. p. 214, and in the privately-issued *Ruskiniana*, 1890, i. 32.]

[3] [A small book of political caricatures, ridiculing the Parnell-Gladstone alliance, published by William Blackwood & Sons (December 1887). The caricatures and letterpress were by Mr. G. R. Halkett, afterwards a contributor of caricatures to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and editor of the *Pall Mall Magazine*. The letter was printed in the *St. James's Gazette*, January 18, 1888, and in the *Daily Telegraph* on the following day. It was reprinted in *Igdrasil*, 1890, vol. ii. p. 14, and in the privately-issued *Ruskiniana*, 1890, i. 74.]



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comes of their being matter of common notoriety, to imagine. The caricatures are far more powerful and less gross than those of the old English school, and I suppose art of this kind to be the only means of making a vivid impression on some orders of the populace. But it assuredly, at the same time, depraves their tastes and destroys their respect, not only for the persons held up to their reprobation, but for all governments and for all human speech or face or form; while the work itself, though, as I said, in its kind powerful, is without essential value or any skill which, after it has answered its momentary purpose, would render it deserving of preservation. I deeply regret, in this and all like instances, the tone given to political statement and debate, by making an ugly jest of falsehood or a light one of crime, which should be punished by the nation's sorrow in its anger—not by its satire, still less left unpunished by its contempt.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

JOHN RUSKIN.

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## VIII

# THE ART OF MEZZOTINT[1]

## (1884)

"MR. RUSKIN in 'gratefully accepting' the dedication of Mr. Seymour Haden's mezzotint of Turner's mezzotint of Turner's 'Calais Pier,' has written to express his delight at the eminent etcher's attempt to revive that beautiful art. Mezzotint, says Mr. Ruskin, is the only satisfactory way in which Turner's pictures can be rendered in chiaro-oscuro. This being so, it would be well, if for no other reason, that the art should be maintained; but seeing that the demand for artistic reproductions has increased a hundredfold during the last quarter of a century, it is more than doubtful if the more rapidly executed and cheaper processes will allow of the continued existence of the fastidious and more costly method of free-hand mezzotinting. In all probability, unless some artist should arise, impelled, like Mr. Seymour Haden, by love of art without reference to gain, mezzotint will be permitted to drop out of the list of engraver's methods altogether."

[1] [From the *Pall Mall Gazette* of July 31, 1884. It is not clear how far the writer was quoting the words of Ruskin's letter. In connexion with what Ruskin says of mezzotint as the only satisfactory way of rendering Turner, compare Vol. XIII. p. 382; where, in saying that the *Rivers* were "skilfully engraved, but only in mezzotint," Ruskin meant not to disparage the process but to indicate that there were not in that case, as in the *Liber*, etchings as well. The plate here referred to, by Mr. (now Sir) Seymour Haden (the well-known surgeon and Founder and President of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers), is from the painting by Turner in the National Gallery (No. 472). It is No. 140 in Sir W. R. Drake's *Descriptive Catalogue of the Etched Work of Francis Seymour Haden* (1880), and D. 140 in the *Supplement* to that work by H. N. Harrington (1903).]



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# IX

# THE NUDE IN ART

## (1885)

### TO THE EDITOR OF THE *PALL MALL GAZETTE*[1]

SIR,—I did not see till yesterday the reference made to me in the third page of your yesterday's issue. The passages quoted by your correspondent are not only consistent but, being written in both instances with great care, contain all I should have wished to say on the subject, had not private appeals to me by art students compelled me to point out that the works in question could have attracted no attention but by their impropriety; and seem to have been expressly executed to prove the applicability to the ordinary British artist of the remark made on Bewick in *Ariadne Florentina*,

[1] [Of June 1, 1885. The letter was headed "A Genuine Letter of Mr. Ruskin's," the reference being to a letter, immediately preceding it in the column, in which his solicitors, Messrs. Tarrant and Mackerell, warned the public against buying letters purporting to be by him, as a manufactory had been discovered from which 280 forged letters had recently been issued.

The letter of Ruskin refers to a discussion which occupied much space in the newspapers of the time on certain pictures in the Academy and Grosvenor Gallery of 1885. It was started in the *Times* of May 20 by a letter signed "British Matron" making "public remonstrance against the display of nudity at the two principal galleries of modern art in London." A weightier letter appeared on May 25 signed "H." (now well understood to have been written by the late J. C. Horsley, R.A.), in which, while dissociating himself from the extreme views of "British Matron," he regretted the tendency to depart from the ideal treatment of the nude, and to throw over "certain special artistic conventions as old as Praxiteles." The discussion was taken up in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which on May 27 published a letter citing Ruskin's cautions against the study of the nude in *Eagle's Nest* (§§ 164–167). On the following day another correspondent cited, on the other hand, *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 194–195), where Ruskin praises the noble nude of Giorgione. Upon this letter the editorial remark was made that there was no inconsistency between the two passages, and Ruskin himself was invited to intervene in the discussion. To that appeal he responded in the letter printed above. At a later date (October 15, 1885) the *Pall Mall Gazette* published a letter signed "K. B.," who, "as an old art student," had some years ago written to Ruskin to resolve his perplexities on the subject of studying from the female nude: "while my religious convictions seemed to forbid it, I was assured on the other hand that it was a necessity." Ruskin replied, "Of course you can do without it, and do much better than with it."]



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that "he could paint a pig, but not a Venus."[1] For the rest, the British public cannot but feel that these pictures have been enough condemned by the tone of the letters and articles written in their defence.[2] The recent phrenzies of dissection and exposure in science and art are, indeed, merely opposite poles of one and the same rage—substituting, in classic thought, for the noble sorrow—*non te restituet pietas*[3]—the ignoble hope—*restituet impietas*; and, in Christian thought, for ancient Madonna worship—insult alike to the Matron and the Child.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN RUSKIN.

HERNE HILL, *May* 31.

[1] [*Ariadne*, § 154, and compare *Art of England*, § 196.]

[2] [Among the letters in the *Times* was one (May 21) from an A.R.A. (since deceased), of which the taste may be judged from the following extract. Whence, he asked, does the shame of "British Matron" arise? "Is it the shame of modesty—so sad to think how hopelessly less beautiful her own figure is than that in the lovely picture which enchants her masculine friend? Or is it the noble shame of indignation that the miserable painter should so meanly conceive and so shabbily represent those charms on which her power in the world may be supposed to depend?" It was of this letter, as Ruskin explained at the time to one of the editors, that he was here thinking.]

[3] [Horace: *Odes*, iv. 7, 23.]

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# X

# NOTES ON MILLAIS

## (1886)

[From *Notes on Some of the Principal Pictures of Sir John Everett Millais, exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery*, 1886. This catalogue, compiled by Mr. A. Gordon Crawford—a pseudonym for Mr. A. G. Wise—consisted, for the most part, of Ruskin's already published criticisms. The "Editor's Note" contained the remark by Ruskin which is cited above, p. xxi. Ruskin added, however, some words of preface (his signature being given in facsimile), and a few new notes. One of these has already been given: see above, p. 293 *n*. The others are here collected:—]

"PREFACE.—The permission given to the compiler of the following catalogue to insert pieces of my former criticism in it was given in the hope that some of the fragments might add interest to the most important exhibition of English art yet held in this country; but having no time to read the proofs of the catalogue itself, I must in the outset broadly efface any impression that may be given by it of my criticisms having been of any service to the Pre-Raphaelite school, except in protecting it against vulgar outcry.[1] The painters themselves rightly resented the idea of misjudging friends that I was either their precursor or their guide; they were entirely original in their thoughts, and independent in their practice. Rossetti, I fear, even exaggerated his colour because I told him it was too violent; and to this very day my love of Turner dims Mr. Burne-Jones's pleasure in my praise.—JOHN RUSKIN, Brantwood, 22nd Jan. 1886."

THE CARPENTER'S SHOP; OR, CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF HIS PARENTS. (1850.)

[The compiler of the catalogue had written, "Here the story implants itself at once as true." Ruskin appended a footnote:—]

"It does nothing of the sort, and the picture is only an elementary, and in many respects an extremely faultful example of the master's first manner.—J. R., 1886."[2]

[1] [See further on this subject, Introduction to Vol. XII. pp. xliii.–xlvii.]

[2] [For other notices of this picture, see above, pp. 111, 215, and Vol. XII. p. 320.]



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MARIANA IN THE MOATED GRANGE. (1851.)

"The picture has always been a precious memory to me; but if the painter had painted Mariana at work in an unmoated grange, instead of idle in a moated one, it had been more to the purpose—whether of art or life.—J. R., 1886."[1]

THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE: "It might be done, and England should do it."[2] (1874.)

"I have not seen this picture, but it must be a glorious one, judging merely from the coloured print. But as for Passages, either North-West or South-East, if England would mind her business at home it would be the better for her.—J. R., 1886."

FOR THE SQUIRE.[3] (Grosvenor Gallery, 1882.)

"One of the most deep and pathetic renderings of expression among the painter's great works of this kind.—J. R., 1886."

THE ORNITHOLOGIST; OR, THE RULING PASSION.[4] (1885.)

"I have never seen any work of modern art with more delight and admiration than this.—J. R., 1886."[5]

[To the last passage cited by the compiler in the *Notes*, Ruskin appended the following passage :—]

"Looking back now on the painter's career—crowned as it has lately been by some of the best pieces of freehand painting in the world, I am more disposed to regret his never having given expression to his power of animal-painting, wholly unrivalled in its kind, than any of the shortcomings in his actual work.—J. R., 1886."

[1] [See also above, p. 107.]

[2] [Now in the Tate Gallery (No. 1509). The words are supposed to be uttered by the old sailor (painted from Trelawney) represented in the picture.]

[3] [A little girl holding a letter; the picture is in the collection of Mr. H. F. Makins.]

[4] [In the painter's possession at the time of his death. The principal figure was painted from Mr. Barlow, R.A., the engraver. The subject was suggested to Millais by a visit to John Gould, the famous ornithologist (see *Life and Letters of Millais*, ii. p. 169). One of the editors had a conversation with Ruskin on the picture shows of 1885 :—

> "There are only three things," he said, "worth looking at in them. One is Millais's big picture at the Academy—with the entirely noble old man and the noble young girl in front. The second is Briton Riviere's Stolen Kisses; and the third is a little drawing of Mrs. Allingham's at the Old Water-Colour Society. In all Millais's other pictures there is his scornful flinging of unfinished work; but there's never any denying his power. Whether he is good one year, or bad, he is always the most powerful of them all."]

[5] [For a note on Ruskin's successive references to Millais in *Academy Notes*, see above, p. 22 *n.* For general notices of the painter in Ruskin's earlier works, see Vol. XII. pp. 162, 319 *seq.*, 360, Vol. III. p. 621 *n.*, Vol. XI. pp. 36 *n.*, 229 *n.*, and *Giotto and his Works in Padua*, § 12. In addition to the Notes printed above, Ruskin published some notices of Millais's pictures of 1877; for these see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 79; and in *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism* (1878), § 4, he noticed "The Blind Girl," which was at the Academy in 1856.]

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# XI

# PASSAGES FROM EXHIBITION CATALOGUES, ETC.

## (1884–1892)

### 1

[*Catalogue of a Collection of Studies in Oil of The English Lake Country*, by the Hon. Stephen Coleridge, M.A., June 1891. London: The Dowdeswell Galleries, 160 New Bond Street. At p. 5 of the Introduction the writer "A. M." says: "As early as 1884 Mr. Ruskin, who saw some of these studies, wrote what the artist, in a letter to a friend, calls 'words of kindly instruction'":—]

"Fix your mind on skies, and give up everything for them at present—no study will reward you more, nor is any in so completely elementary a state. Give your young energy to it, and you will soon have wonderful things to tell and show the world. Wait quietly for *calm*, clear weather, quiet clouds, and distant ones, when they come, and read up all that is known of them, and go on."

### 2. SUTTON PALMER'S DRAWINGS[1] (1886)

The drawings are entirely praiseworthy, and in a kind which needs no praise from me, except the attestation that every scene is absolutely true to scale and form.

Mr. Sutton Palmer's sunshiny temper merits, better than mine, Carlyle's epithet—for me. He is really an "Ethereal" Palmer.[2]

[1] [From p. 1 of a *Catalogue of Drawings painted by Sutton Palmer during the past two years illustrating some of the beauties of the English Lake, now exhibiting at Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell's, 133 New Bond Street (Two Doors from the Grosvenor Gallery) 1887*. The extract was also on a circular issued by Messrs. Dowdeswell in 1887, headed "To Mr. C. W. Dowdeswell. Extract from Letter from Professor Ruskin, 19th November, 1886." The extract was reprinted in *Igdrasil*, June 1890, vol. i. pp. 212–213, and again in *Ruskiniana*, Part i. pp. 30–31.]

[2] [The allusion is to a copy of *The Early Kings of Norway*, presented by the author to Ruskin, with the following inscription:—

"To my dear and ethereal Ruskin, whom God preserve. Chelsea, 4th May, 1875. T. Carlyle."

The signature alone is in Carlyle's hand.]



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I feel *myself* a little dull for want of cottages,—not to say shelterless for want of inns,—and I do think we ought to have had some grimmer crags, with possibilities of tumble off—or losing one's way.

In all Mr. Palmer's drawings one is led down to the lake, or by the river on velvet and down of grass and moss; one could travel such a country barefoot. I wish, by the way, that Scottish fashion would come in again!

With sincere thanks for sight of the drawings and compliments to the artist.

Yours, etc., etc.

## 3. A LETTER ON THOMAS GIRTIN[1] (1887)

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
16*th January*, 1887.

DEAR SIR,—I have the deepest and the fondest regard for your great-grandfather's work, holding it to be entirely authoritative and faultless as a type, not only of pure water-colour execution, but of pure artistic feeling and insight into what is noblest and capable of rendering dignity in familiar subjects. He is often as impressive to me as Nature herself, nor do I doubt that Turner owed more to his teaching and companionship than to his own genius in the first years of his life.

Believe me, your faithful servant,
J. RUSKIN.

## 4

[*Catalogue of a Collection of Water-Colour Drawings of Arthur Severn, R.I., with Prefatory Notes upon his work and upon the 100 Exhibitions held at the Fine Art Society's, 148 New Bond Street, London. 1892.* At pp. 3–5 of the Prefatory Note Mr. Arthur Severn writes:—]

"I am sorry that for this exhibition of mine I cannot get Ruskin to write something, but it is out of the question in his present state of health. Of course most of my friends would expect something from his hand, and if he had been well enough, I am sure he would have written me a preface, and a very interesting one too! as he would have been able to have some nice hits at some of us painters who go out of our way to paint atmospheric effects in London and elsewhere, produced by fog and smoke and gloom, and which suggest, what he considers mere squalor and the smoke which he hates. I remember once, many years ago, my showing him a large drawing I did from Manchester

[1] [This letter was addressed to Mr. Francis Pierrepoint Barnard. It first appeared at pp. 64–65 of *The Earlier English Water-Colour Painters*, by Cosmo Monkhouse, 1889. It was thence reprinted in *Igdrasil*, June 1890, vol. i. p. 213, and in *Ruskiniana*, Part i. p. 31. For Girtin (1773–1802), see Vol. V. p. 409, Vol. XII. p. 309 *n.*]

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Buildings, close to Westminster Bridge, of St. Paul's at sunrise, looking across the river. He said, 'What a beastly subject!' I was rather surprised, and he saw that I felt it, for he at once took me by the arm and said, 'But, my dear Arthur, that little cloud is wonderfully true, and could not be better!' I fancy it was the great Shot Tower at Waterloo Bridge, and the Charing Cross railway bridge he could not stand.

"Years after, Albert Goodwin and I travelled with him through Italy and France. I think he rather learnt then that it is much better to let young artists do what they like best; in fact, he told us so, after a month's suggesting to us what we should do. We soon found we could please him much more in this way. With Ruskin, I have always noticed, a great deal depends on the association of ideas in his mind in looking at a scene in nature. A hayfield at Coniston in the early morning dew, with blue sky above, or a rock covered with beautiful moss, is to him a subject to enjoy and paint if possible. He once offered me a carriage and pair to drive, I don't know how many miles, and fifty guineas when the work was done, if I would draw a particular rock with velvety moss growing about it. In this instance I declined, but often, of course, I have been able to do what he liked, and he has been very pleased. Once in the lovely Rokeby Yorkshire country I did a sketch of Brignol Bay which delighted him, and when I arrived at the little inn (where we were staying) at about 9 o'clock, having been at work till then and having had no dinner, he insisted on my sitting down at the table, and went himself to fetch the different dishes, with what help the little shy Yorkshire maid could give, saying, 'Arthur has done a capital sketch, and must be tired and hungry, and I will wait on him.' Had I done a London subject, equally well, he wouldn't have cared a straw. He was always pleased when I painted in Switzerland or at Amiens or Venice, or in any places he loved. Great overgrown cities like London he never could endure."

END OF VOLUME XIV

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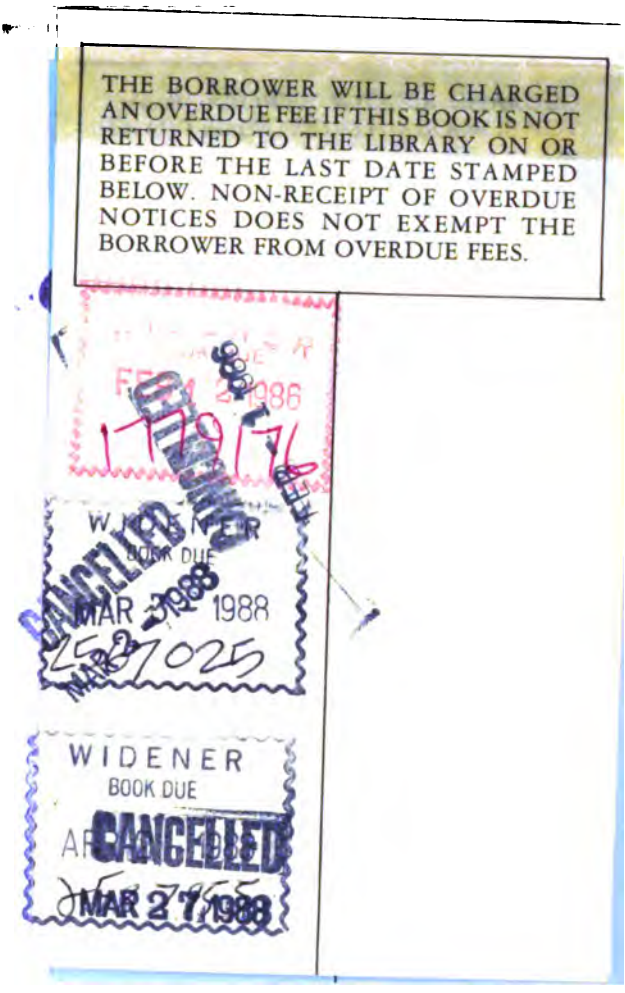


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